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Teacher Self-Efficacy in Inclusive Education: The Case of Low-Performing Private Schools in Dubai

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TEACHER SELF-EFFICACY IN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION: THE CASE OF LOW-PERFORMING PRIVATE SCHOOLS IN DUBAI

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Introductory Pages

Abstract

Teachers commonly face challenges with students experiencing disabilities in their classrooms, but these are exacerbated when teachers have not been 'empower[ed] to include' (Gaad, 2015). Research findings have established that teachers with a high self-efficacy in inclusion are key enablers of learning for students experiencing disabilities, and their views are important (Avramidis,2002). In private schools judged by the Dubai authorities as generally low-performing, teacher self-efficacy in inclusion was expected to be low. This study produces insights on teacher self-confidence in inclusion at schools with limited resources and aims to help schools improve their inclusion provision by signaling prioritized areas for development.

The research methods used included semi-structured interviews, focus group meetings, and a closed-ended survey to capture teacher perceptions of their self-efficacy in inclusion, with questions drawing partially on the Index for Inclusion developed by Booth and Ainscow (2002). Data was gathered from fifty teaching staff in seven purposively selected private schools to answer the research questions about their understandings of inclusive education (IE); their views on their respective schools' practices of inclusive education; and their self-judgements of their abilities to cope. Qualitative results were triangulated with the quantified results of the survey, and with secondary data from Dubai government published documents of the country's commitment to international policies in IE.

Results showed a prevalence of varying understandings of IE both across and within schools, where different philosophical approaches to inclusion are applied. Among the main factors negatively affecting teacher self-efficacy in IE were issues in teacher professional development, and leadership practices of a rigid hierarchical management that is incompatible with the requirements of an effective IE.

The findings of this study confirm previous knowledge of the importance of capacity building of teaching staff through adequate professional development measures. These findings emphasise the need for a school leadership that supports and empowers teachers and is able to establish relations of effective collaboration

amongst staff that can lead to a collective efficacy. The suggestion is made that teacher self-efficacy be visualized as a sensor that can indicate any misgivings of practices in inclusive education, thus help an agile leadership to address any issues impeding the enhancement of teacher self-efficacy.

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DEDICATION

To honour the memory of my beloved Mother… my source of inspiration.

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Abbreviations

ACTVET- Abu Dhabi Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training

ADEC- Abu Dhabi Education Council

CAT4- Cognitive Abilities Test

CTE- Collective Teacher Efficacy

GDP- Gross Domestic Product

HoS- Head of Section

IE- Inclusive Education

IEA- International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement

IEF- Inclusive Education Framework

IEP- Individualised Educational Programme

KHDA – Knowledge and Human Development Authority

MENA- Middle East and Northern Africa

MoE- Ministry of Education

OECD- Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development

PISA- Programme for International Student Assessment

SCT- Social Cognitive Theory

SDG4-Sustainable Development Goals 4 (UNESCO)

SE- Self-Efficacy

SEND-Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

SEN-Special Educational Needs

SIF- School Inspection Framework

SoD- Students of Determination

TALIS- Teaching and Learning International Study

TIMSS- Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study

UAE- United Arab Emirates

UK- United Kingdom

UNCRPD- United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

UNESCO-United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

UNICEF- United Nations International Children's Educational Fund

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1 CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Self-efficacy is conceptualized by Albert Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory as the beliefs of individuals in their own ability to plan, organize, and execute a certain task that is required to attain given goals. (Bandura, 1997). In inclusion provision, teachers have been recognized as a key element in the successful implementation of inclusion policy (Avramidis, 2002; Forlin and Lian, 2008), and their self-efficacy has been found to affect inclusion in different ways: it is positively associated with their attitude towards inclusion (Weisel and Dror, 2006), and enables them to be more persistent in their efforts with students who are struggling, and motivates teachers towards enabling the achievement of students experiencing disabilities (Tschannen-Moran and Hoy, 2001). Self-efficacy satisfies teachers' own well-being (Kuusinen,2016), and is a strong predictor of their job satisfaction and intention to stay in the profession (Skaalvik and Skaalvik, 2007). However, if one has insufficient knowledge and skills to implement a specialised task, the self-confidence in one's ability to produce the desired results is presumably challenged.

Following this section on Introduction, section (1.2) provides an overview of what inclusion is about; Section (1.3) states the aim, purpose and significance of this study; Section (1.4) provides the context of private schools in Dubai; section (1.5) clarifies the meanings of the terms used. Section (1.6) provides the research questions. Section (1.7 and 1.8) are respectively about the status of teachers and schools in this study; and the terms and scope of the study. Then follows section (1.9) on the Conceptual Framework of this inquiry; and my personal situation in section (1.10). Finally, section (1.11) is a summary; and section (1.12) presents the layout of the thesis.

1.2 Overview of Inclusion

Education first became internationally recognized as one of the basic human rights in 1948, when the United Nations General Assembly issued the Universal Declaration of Basic Human Rights. About fifty years later, the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education (UNESCO, 1994) was another milestone in acknowledging the rights for all to equity in education and called on countries to accommodate all children in regular schools, regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions in order to eliminate discrimination and lead to a more just society (ibid.). The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities followed, requiring member countries to embed in their legislations the principles of equitable access to a quality inclusive education for individuals with disabilities ((UNCRPD, 2006). Further on, the Education 2030 Framework for Action was published (UNESCO,2016) under a title that declares the objective of ensuring 'inclusive and equitable quality education' emphasizing the right of all individuals to equity in education, or equal opportunities to access a quality education and to learn together with their peers in the same classroom to develop their skills and realize their full potential as citizens of a society.

Inclusion of students experiencing disability in mainstream schools has gained wide practice worldwide, but is applied in many different forms, due to differing national understandings of how to implement inclusion (OECD, 2020). The literature shows that inclusion has been widely researched, but usually from the student perspective, often with the objective of evaluating teachers' influence on general student outcomes (Hanushek and Raymond, 2004; Hattie, 2009; Chapman et al., 2011); on the learning of students with disabilities (Guskey & Passaro,1994; Pajares,1997; Avramidis and Norwich,2002; Forlin & Lian, 2008), and on teacher attitudes towards inclusion of children with special educational needs (Urton et al., 2014).

This study aims to highlight the teachers' perspectives of inclusion in seven private schools in Dubai, and to provide insights on ways of understanding

shortcomings that impede the enhancement of teacher self-efficacy in coping with students of diverse abilities within the same classroom as a crucial step towards improving inclusion provision. Unlike other studies that provide dimensions for measuring self-efficacy in specific tasks (Skaalvik and Skaalvik, 2007; Kuusinen,2016), this inquiry is about teachers' self-judgements of their abilities in inclusive education (IE): their sense of their abilities and the way they articulate their thoughts is used as a sensor for understanding the problems with inclusion encountered in a sample of schools selected as having issues with achieving inclusive education.

1.3 Purpose and Significance of this Study

Dubai, one of the seven emirates in the United Arab Emirates(UAE), has been at the forefront in leading private schools towards achieving the objectives of the National Agenda of Vision 2021, the UAE strategic plan for 2010-2021, which aspires to establish 'a knowledge-based economy driven by innovation, research, science and technology'; and the realisation that this would require a world-class education system (KHDA, ACTVET, ADEC, and MoE, 2015, p.7). Towards this end, the Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA) is the Dubai government arm that has been licensing, inspecting and rating private schools in Dubai since 2007, and issuing policies to ensure a quality education is provided in the private sector of the emirate. A school is judged as low-performing if its education provision is rated by the School Inspection teams at KHDA as below the UAE desired rating of 'good'. Inclusion was introduced to UAE schools in 2010 (MoE, 2010), which set the stage for drastic changes to transform schools to 'mainstream', with inclusion being applied throughout the country; and became mandatory in Dubai private schools in 2014.

KHDA data show that ever since 2014, many private schools in the emirate have shown progress in their adaptation to the requirements of inclusion (KHDA, 2018). However, 57 schools which constitute about one third of all private schools in Dubai, where 100,000 students were enrolled, were rated by the School Inspection teams at KHDA as 'acceptable' or less in the year 2017-2018, particularly in the

standards of teaching, learning, and good leadership. Table 1.1 below is a summary of the percentage of schools that have improved during ten years (2008-2018) in three aspects: teaching for effective learning; leadership; and self evaluation (KHDA, 2018). Improvement was measured as the rise to the rating of 'good', which is the Dubai government minimum level of desired performance in private schools in the emirate.

The schools selected for this study are from three school types in terms of curriculum offered: the UAE Ministry of Education (MoE) curriculum; and schools offering a curriculum from the Uk or from the US. Table 1.1 shows that during the ten years from 2008 to 2018, leadership improved in the three school types, but in schools that offer the MoE curriculum, 'teaching for effective learning' showed a drop of 8%, thus presented a call of alert for the authority. With such a drop in a core task of any school, my expectation was that these schools could not be able to satisfy the standards of IE as required by the Dubai Inclusive Education Policy Framework (DIEPF) issued in 2017 (KHDA, 2017a), which is aligned with the United Nations Convention for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD, 2006); that the low rating of these schools is a problem situated with the teachers; and that teacher self-efficacy in IE would also be weak. Therefore, identifying measures for enhancing teacher self-efficacy in IE is a necessity to help schools move forward.

Table 1.1 Percentage of Dubai private schools rated as 'good' in teaching for effective learning; leadership; and self-evaluation over the ten-year period 2008-2018.

School aspects rated as 'good'	MoE		US		UK	
	2008	2018	2008	2018	2008	2018
Teaching for effective learning	33%	**25%**	42%	64%	51%	84%
Leadership	7%	38%	42%	55%	52%	83%
Self-Evaluation	0	31%	22%	48%	38%	78%

*(**S**ource: KHDA, 2018, pp.15,19,& 27).*

Many of these schools were repeatedly rated as low-performing for at least 5 years in a row, a result that is interpreted by the authority as weighing down on Dubai's aspiration to achieve the country's strategic plan (Vision 2021) to have a 'world-class education system' by 2021 (KHDA, ACTVET, ADEC and MoE, 2015, p.11), which marks the fiftieth anniversary since the establishment of the UAE in

1971. Vision 2021 is to realise inclusion for students with disabilities as lying at the heart of effective education in general, and by applying international standards of IE in the emirate's private schools (KHDA, 2019a).

To examine teachers' views on the recently adopted inclusion in some schools of the country, a UAE nationwide study was conducted in 2009, following the declaration in 2006 of the UAE Federal Law No. 29 for Special Needs Rights. Teachers had concerns because they usually had not been trained in inclusion practices, and needed guidance (Gaad & Thabet, 2009). In other studies, teachers reported a sense of 'fear' and 'apprehension' that are linked to the potential repercussions of failure and blame (Gaad and Khan, 2007), with similar results in a later study (Alborno and Gaad, 2014). However, literature shows that such concerns are also common amongst other teachers in countries that have a longer experience in inclusion (Savolainen et al., 2012), which implies that these concerns could be more widespread than only in low achieving schools.

Statutory obligations have been sifted or interpreted differently by schools, which led to misconceptions that emerged, and their translation into a series of actions, measures, procedures and outcomes that are very different from those indicated by DIEPF and are no longer approved by KHDA. Research findings have indicated that a strong teacher self-efficacy is a crucial element for an effective inclusion (Forlin and Lian, 2008; Forlin and Chambers, 2011); hence, to achieve Dubai's strategic plans of generating a school system that does justice to students of diverse abilities, it follows that teachers need to be adequately trained to ensure successful inclusion (ibid.).

The purpose of this study is therefore to address the knowledge gap in the generally under-researched construct of teacher self-efficacy in inclusive education (IE) in developing countries of the region (Srivastava et al., 2013), and particularly in the context of schools judged as low performers, with respect to coping with students with disabilities. Most studies on teacher self-efficacy have been focused on gathering data from pre-service student teachers to inform teacher training programmes (Leyser et al. 2011; Sharma et al., 2014; Nuo et al., 2016) or on how

student outcomes are impacted by teacher self-efficacy in how they address student differences related to learning (Corno, 2008), or on teachers' views of the practice of inclusion (Gaad and Khan, 2007). Yet regarding in-service teachers who generally have experience in teaching but for whom the presence of students with disabilities in their classrooms created a new challenge, their perspective of inclusion practices in their schools is under-researched in the MENA countries (Sheikh, 2016), a region with escalating conflicts and already in dire need to invest in the education of youth and empower them to engage in development processes (UNESCO, 2016b).

Teachers are widely acknowledged as the agency to student learning whose beliefs, attitudes, and actions create the contexts in which children are able to participate and learn (Chapman et al., 2011). Moreover, research findings indicate that teacher views are crucial for the implementation of an inclusion policy (Avramidis and Norwich,2002); hence their views, perceptions and experience in IE, are aspects that need to be heard and understood to help schools improve their provision (Avramidis et al.,2000; Urton et al., 2014). As a previous school inspector at KHDA, my awareness that school inspection ratings are based on judgements made of many lesson observations in a school but do not include discussions or giving feedback to teachers, pointed to a gap of untapped knowledge from the teacher viewpoint.

In addition, recent local studies showed that teachers commonly indicated their need for a needs-based training, support and guidance to enable them to cope (Gaad and Khan, 2007; Alborno and Gaad, 2014). Prior to the government decision in 2010 of making inclusion mandatory in all schools of the UAE, it was not customary for private schools in Dubai to enrol students with disabilities, with the pretext that schools lacked the required specialist staff. As there is an increasing parent awareness of the inclusion services now provided in private schools, teachers reported that the numbers of students with disabilities are rising every year. This new situation leaves all schools with no room for choice, and calls for a new set of competences for all teaching staff:

> ‘The inclusion of individuals of determination within private schools operating in Dubai is not a choice**, it is an imperative**. It is a key milestone as Dubai progresses towards a system of educational excellence for all’ (KHDA, 2019a, p.8).

1.4 Contexts of Schools in this Study

KHDA issued the Dubai Inclusive Education Policy Framework (DIEPF) in 2017, based on the UAE commitment to the UNCRPD; on the related federal laws in 2006 and 2009; and on Dubai Law no. 2 (2014) Concerning Protection of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in the Emirate of Dubai. DIEPF lists the below standards for guidance on the actions necessary to apply a full inclusion and ‘to assure good governance and accountability to enhance and extend quality inclusive education services’ being provided in education settings in Dubai (KHDA, 2017a, p.12):

1. ‘Identification and Early Intervention
2. Admissions, Participation and Equity
3. Leadership and Accountability
4. Systems of Support for Inclusive Education
5. Special Centres as a Resource for Inclusive Education
6. CO-operation, Co-ordination and Partnerships
7. Fostering a Cuture of Inclusive Education
8. Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting
9. Resourcing for Inclusive Education
10. Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Higher Education and Post-School Environment.’

DIEPF offers guidance on the organization and actions of a school system to enable educational access, participation and engagement of students experiencing disabilities (KHDA,2019b). DIEPF’s description indicates that inclusive education

(IE) is supposed to impart a sense of student belonging, well-being and social inclusion, and provides guidelines to transform the school system towards becoming an inclusive for *all* students. (KHDA, 2017a, p.53):

> **'Inclusive education** is about ensuring access to quality education for all students by effectively meeting their diverse needs in a way that is responsive, accepting, respectful and supportive. This is evident through student engagement and participation in an education programme within a common learning environment with the benefit of targeted support which enables the reduction and removal of barriers that may lead to exclusion.
>
> 'Inclusive education is not a project or an initiative. It is the progressive development of attitudes, behaviour, systems and beliefs that enable inclusive education to become a norm that underpins school culture and is reflected in the everyday life of the school community.'

This statement is based on a rights perspective which highlights IE as providing equity in quality education for all. It suggests a holistic approach catering for the needs of all students but makes no specific mention of either students with disabilities or of outcomes. The statement presents a change of course from the previous UAE government requirement made in 2010 for schools to focus their efforts on the needs of students with disabilities (MoE, 2010); but in both cases of the federal law issued in 2010, and the Dubai policy in 2017, they presented challenges to teacher preparedness and in their abilities to cope with students of diverse disabilities in one classroom.

By relating to *all* students, IE as described above is aligned with the current internationally accepted goals, e.g., the first part of the United Nations Sustainability Development Goal (SDG4) of the Education 2030 Agenda: the Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action for the Implementation of SDG4 (UNESCO, 2016a, p.8) states its objective as follows:

> '…to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education, and to promote lifelong learning opportunities for all'.

The second part of the above definition relating to promoting lifelong opportunities for all is a requirement that appears in KHDA regulations only after this study was conducted in 2019. However, as will be seen, my proposals around the need for teachers' development are an affirmation of the need for their continued learning

through various forms of professional development as a lifelong education of teachers.

The terms ‘access’ and ‘equity’ translate into courses of actions that are logically intertwined, since a claim that equal opportunities are provided implies that all students have access to a quality education, based on the below internationally acknowledged definitions (UNESCO, 2017, p.13):

> - **Access** is about prohibiting any form of exclusion within and from education, or of limiting educational opportunities regardless of perceived differences relating to gender, ethnic/social origin, language, religion, nationality, economic condition, or ability.
>
> -**Equity** is about ensuring that there is a concern with fairness, such that the education of all learners is seen as having equal importance.

In addition to the placement of students with disabilities with their peers in a mainstream class, the above UNESCO definition of ‘access’ implies that to make the learning of all students an achievable goal, teacher instruction needs to make use of variable and pertinent methods, resources and strategies. When these are within the reach of all students, then equity can be expected to be achieved.

To understand the basis on which schools plan their inclusion practices, a review of the federal and Dubai government documents that define equity and access shows there are wide differences between the two legislations which are likely to cause confusion for school leadership regarding which course to follow. The federal law defines ‘access’ simply as follows (KHDA, ACTVET, ADEC and MoE, 2015, p.121): ‘A way into experiencing a curriculum’. While KHDA documents use the expression ‘equitable access’ and indicate that schools need to commit to the below recommendation cited from the European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education (2012), (in KHDA, 2019a, p.13):

> ‘Redesigning, enriching and adapting the mainstream curriculum to become universally accessible is necessary to enable the inclusion of students of determination. It is also a fundamental component of enabling high quality engagement, participation, learning and outcomes for all students’.

As a human right for all students, equity embraces and values diversity, which in turn is viewed as an opportunity for learning rather than a challenge (Ainscow,2001). As such, diversity is viewed as a learning opportunity for both students and teachers to benefit from; but for this end to be achieved, teachers need to be adequately trained, with all teaching staff being engaged in coherent efforts (Forlin and Chambers, 2011). Research findings indicate that for the principles of equitable access to be applied, a major starting point recommended is teacher professional development within a social setting, i.e., opportunities for teachers to learn through a continuous professional dialogue with inclusion specialists and their peers, as a regular exercise in a school because 'inclusion is a process', or a continuous cycle of plan-implement-assess action (Ainscow and Miles, 2015, p.2). Such on-going teacher professional development is also indicated as a necessity in SDG4 (UNESCO, 2016a).

In addition to staff cooperation and collaboration, research also recommends two main elements in a school: 'clarity of definition', and 'forms of evidence' as embedded practices that are enabled by a distribution of leadership that fosters the participation of all involved together in their efforts around a common purpose (Ainscow and Miles, 2015, p.2): a strong case in point for the majority of schools in this study.

To shift the attention of school staff accordingly, the language used throughout the text of all Dubai government regulations from 2017 onwards introduces terms that more accurately reflect IE principles of catering to the learning of all students. For instance, the expression 'experiencing disability' is used instead of students with disabilities, to indicate that the disability is not a permanent or inherent trait but is a status that was produced as the outcome of an experience or exposure to some factor of the environment that negatively impacted a student. As such, society is held accountable for the individual's state of disability by causing barriers to his/her learning. DIEPF therefore requires schools to focus on eliminating these barriers and to promote the development of the full potential of the individual at the social and academic levels (KHDA, 2017a). This notion embeds the connotations of both 'access' and 'equity' to a quality education, as indicated in the SDG4 Framework for Action (ibid.). Another example is the UAE government decision made in 2017 to

replace the term ‘disabled people’ with the expression ‘people/students of determination’, in recognition of their achievements in various spheres, to indicate that determination and a strong will can do the impossible (Khaleej Times, 18 April 2017), and to promote a positive shift in attitudes of the general public towards disability. In addition, at the level of the school is a complex array of definitions and ambiguity of terms as can be seen in section 1.5 below.

1.5 Meanings of the Terms used

In many respects it is difficult to establish one coherent sense of the key definitions surrounding IE used in this thesis because there were differences in the implementation of inclusion in the schools visited in this study. Participants in these schools use the key terms of inclusion variably, and often draw upon ideas underpinning the policy documents of the federal level, and less on those of the Dubai level of government. For clarification on other terms used in the visited schools, the reader is directed to Appendix 3 which presents a lexicon of the terminology at the UAE federal and at the Dubai government levels, which relate to two divergent philosophies of inclusion (Hornby, 2015), namely the medical model (MM) and the social model (SM), each of which entails a different set of practices. This leads to an array of complex conceptual unclarity that had to be worked with in generating the data, and are further discussed in Chapter Two section (2.3.5). For instance, the terms ‘barriers’, and ‘special educational needs and disabilities’ (SEND) are concepts elucidated only in DIEPF but lack corresponding terms in the medical model. To add confusion, other terms such as ‘access’, ‘equity’ and ‘disability’, and even IE are used by both models but hold a different meaning in each case, as clarified in Appendix 3. Moreover, the table in this Appendix 3 reveals how concepts of inclusion have evolved since MoE Law of 2010, up to KHDA’s DIEPF in 2017, in making the shift from the previously adopted philosophic approach of the medical model over to the social model of inclusion.

This section begins by illustrating some of the key differences in the two policy framings of UAE and the international definitions. It then describes the

differences between the medical and social models which differently underpin these models.

1. Disability

Even the fundamental term disability is differently defined and conceptualized.

a) At the federal level, the UAE School Inspection Framework (SIF) defines 'disability' as follows:

> 'A **long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairment** which may hinder a student's participation in the curriculum' (KHDA, ACTVET, ADEC, MoE, 2015, p.123).

The brief definition relates disability to a medical condition or dysfunction of the individual as a cause for impeding student learning. It lacks any guidance for teachers on specific actions to undertake, thus leaving room for speculation on how inclusion needs to be applied. Further on, SIF provides statements to describe inclusion as a process where diversity is honoured and individuals are respected, but these are high-level articulations that lack clarity on specific measures to undertake:

> 'The UAE is determined to become an inclusive, barrier-free, rights-based society that promotes, protects, and ensures the success of all groups of students'.

SIF carries on and requires 'special consideration to ensure the educational inclusion of these groups of students' (ibid., p.13) which include:

> -' effectiveness of identification procedures;
> - appropriateness of curriculum modification systems;
> - impact of specific intervention or personal support mechanisms;
> - use of feedback from monitoring and assessment processes'.

However, it is left up to the schools to fend on their own regarding how to implement those principles. In addition, 'barrier-free' may well be interpreted as enabling easy physical access to all parts of a school, such as providing ramps; but makes no mention of barriers to learning.

b) At the Dubai level, in DIEPF:

> [Disability is] 'A **social condition** that occurs when an individual with a long term limitation experiences attitudinal, social and environmental barriers that prevent full and effective participation within a community. A disability is the result of an individual's interaction with society and is not an attribute of the person.' (KHDA, 2017a, p.52).

The DIEPF definition distinguishes between an impairment, which is a medical issue, and the resulting condition of disability, which is an acquired state rather than an attribute of the individual. Barriers to learning are viewed as being the result of the individuals' interaction with environmental factors, thus making it the responsibility of society to eliminate these factors. However, the DIEPF definition links the occurrence of disability with 'a long term limitation', unlike the United Nations' definition below as a condition that may apply to anyone, whether temporarily or permanently.

In addition, the DIEPF definition also serves to educate the general public on disability, and to bring about a positive shift of attitudes amongst stakeholders and school staff towards individuals with disabilities. It should be noted that the DIEPF definition of disability represents a big step forward from a preceding definition of another authority in Dubai: the Community Development Authority (CDA) issued Dubai Law No.2 in 2014 'Concerning the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in the Emirate of Dubai' (cda.gov.ae), which defined disability as follows:

> 'Person with Disability: A person suffering from a long-term physical, mental, or sensory deficiency or impairment that may hinder his full and effective participation in the society on an equal footing with others.'

This CDA definition appears to re-iterate other definitions at federal level both in 2010 and in 2015. Therefore, it is no wonder, with all these complexities that it is questionable whether all schools in Dubai complied by making the shift to enact DIEPF, which calls for drastic changes to be made in the organization and operations of a school with traditional practices. As will be seen in my study, several teachers acknowledged that the social environment often has a negative influence on the development of students with disabilities; however, across the literature and

in my study what action is required to reduce the impeding effect of a barrier remains a commonly obscure area.

c) At the international level:

The United Nations' definition below points to the complexity of the term disability, which is a condition that may apply to anyone, as we are all likely to go through an experience that would make us temporarily or permanently disabled.

> [**Disability** is an] 'Umbrella term, covering impairments, activity limitations, and participation restrictions. Impairment is a problem in body function or structure; an activity limitation is a difficulty encountered by an individual in executing a task or action; while a participation restriction is a problem experienced by an individual in involvement in life situations. It is a complex phenomenon, reflecting the interaction between features of a person's body and features of the society in which they live. Overcoming the difficulties faced by people with disabilities requires interventions to remove environmental and social barriers.' (UN, 2018b).

This UN definition eliminates the notion that individuals are seemingly classified in one of two categories, i.e., either with disability, or non-disabled, as the condition of disability may be a temporary state that any individual may experience. Hence, in view of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG4) within Education 2030 (UNESCO, 2016a), member countries are urged to provide education that is inclusive of students of all abilities.

2. Inclusion and Inclusive Education (IE)

Since the above definitions show that disability is conceived in different ways, it follows that inclusion, the service offered to individuals with disability, will also differ accordingly. Below are the definitions of both terms as used by the different levels of government.

a) At the federal level:

> [**Inclusion** is about] 'Access, support for learning and equal opportunities for all students, regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, ability or background' (KHDA, ACTVET, ADEC and MoE, 2015, p.124).

The definition appears to create awareness of the concepts of access and equity for all students, as cornerstones of definitions from international sources. Due to the

absence of any guidance on how to enact such concepts, inclusion in most schools in this study has been interpreted as social integration, as the means to provide equal opportunities for all students to socially interact together. These students are described as having special educational needs (SEN), if they fit as any of the following cases (ibid., p.117):

> 'Behavioural, social and emotional cases; sensory and physical disabilities; medical conditions or health-related disability; speech and language disorders, **but does not include students with additional language needs;** and communication and interaction disabilities, e.g., autistic spectrum disorders, and Asperger's syndrome.'

In a 97-page document (MoE,2010), the earlier federal regulations provided detailed instructions on how to implement inclusion for students at the two extremities of a Bell- curve, (i.e., students with disabilities; and the gifted and talented), but not to *all* students. As such, the practice of 'pull-out' was clearly recommended for students with disabilities and consisted of a temporary segregation of students experiencing disabilities from the rest of their class to receive instruction separately or in small groups (ibid.). Pull-out is a customary practice in many countries of the region (AlKhateeb et al., 2016), but is a provision that is no longer accepted within Dubai's 'specific strategic and legislative frameworks, including DIEPF' (KHDA, 2018, p.43).

Upon comparing Dubai with other countries of the world regarding the criteria used for identifying students with special educational needs, the literature shows that these criteria differ based on social and political considerations of each country. For instance, in many countries there has been an over-representation of migrant and minority students in the category of Special Educational Needs (Migliarini et al., 2019), who may have no impairments, but may be academically under-performing due to language barriers. In the UAE, all the residing expatriates are considered 'migrants' in terms of their legal status; and in private schools of the UAE, they are the norm rather than the minority, and comprise a widely diverse demographic composition, which is all the more reason for implementing an inclusive education that meets the needs of all. This is one of the other examples which reveal country differences in the criteria of a student's eligibility to receive support, which in turn, is

bound to raise issues regarding the comparability of data gathered on numbers and types of disabilities in each of these countries.

b) At the Dubai level (DIEPF):

The formally accepted term in DIEPF policy is 'inclusive education' (IE) to distinguish its approach as different from the term 'inclusion' used at the federal level, and to emphasise that its practices relates to all students.

> '… **inclusive education** is a provision that is committed to educating all students, including students identified as experiencing special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) in a common learning environment.' (KHDA, 2017a, p.10).

In the above DIEPF definition, the term 'inclusion' has been replaced by IE at the Dubai level; and the stipulated 'common learning environment' thus eliminates the approval of the practice of pull-out, based on the view that placement in a segregated classroom is a form of exclusion. Also the term 'special educational needs' has been replaced with 'special educational needs and disabilities' (SEND) by KHDA, and is defined as follows:

> **SEND**: 'A need which occurs when a student identified with an impairment requires the school to make specific modifications or provide specific supports to prevent, remove or reduce any potential disability from occurring and to ensure that the student can access education on an equitable basis and within a common learning environment with same-aged peers.' (KHDA, 2017a, p.11).

Rather than identifying a student by a disability, the above definition is articulated as a high-level message to school leaderships regarding how to adapt their structures and operations in order to meet the needs of students with disabilities on an equitable basis. The DIEPF definition of IE introduces another important dimension for schools to comply with, namely the importance of collaboration amongst all education stakeholders, particularly parents (KHDA, 2019b), which is also emphasised in the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy (UN, 2019), and in the European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education (https://www.european-agency.org/).

c) At the international level:

The UNCRPD (CRPD/C/GC/4, 2016, p.4) defines inclusion as follows:

> *'Inclusion* involves a process of systemic reform embodying changes and modifications in content, teaching methods, approaches, structures and strategies in education to overcome barriers with a vision serving to provide all students of the relevant age range with an equitable and participatory learning experience and environment that best corresponds to their requirements and preferences.'

The same document also emphasizes that the mere placement of students with disabilities in a mainstream class does not constitute inclusion; and directs schools towards the aspects that need to change to effectively accommodate inclusion:

> 'without accompanying structural changes to, for example, organisation, curriculum and teaching and learning strategies, does not constitute inclusion.' (ibid.)

Although the same term 'inclusion' is used both by the UNCRPD and by the federal UAE Ministry of Education (MoE, 2010) as defined earlier in this section, yet the students targeted for support differ in each case: while UNCRPD refers to all students, MoE regulations of 2010 refer to students with disabilities. SDG4 encompasses all students: it emphasises 'equitable and quality education' for all; and within target SDG 4.5 refers to education for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities. Both UNCRPD and SDG4 focus on equity in quality provision, but unlike DIEPF, do not specifically indicate a 'common learning environment' for students with disabilities in a mainstream setting, which suggests that a greater importance lies in the school operations and structures, and in the teaching strategies applied.

At the outset of this study, my expectation was that all private schools in Dubai would be complying with DIEPF policy by applying practices aligned with the terms and concepts of the policy, which is based on UNCRPD principles. Accordingly, the research questions were articulated based on the DIEPF modalities. Each interview would begin with my using the language and terms that pertain to IE as defined by DIEPF. However, early on, many participants would iterate terms from the DIEPF lexicon but their actions would be referring to a

different set of concepts and practices that are not aligned with DIEPF requirements, hence do not apply IE as approved by Dubai government. For instance, for many teachers, the terms ‘access’ and ‘equity’ mentioned in DIEPF meant merely the placement, or opportunity for social interaction of a student with disability in a mainstream classroom, which was even viewed as constituting ‘social development’; while the concept that the students’ under-achievement may be due to barriers to learning would be absent, and instead, instruction would be based on the belief that students’ ability to learn is limited.

So in the actual research, language and meaning was navigated and negotiated, but throughout the text of this study, when participants are quoted, the terms used would only be a verbal reflection of whichever concept represents the participants’ understanding, and which model of inclusion their schools would require them to apply. For instance, ‘inclusion’ and SEN are the terms used for schools that apply the medical model (MM), to describe the separate pedagogy offered to a student identified as with disability (UNICEF 2014); while IE and SEND are the terms used to indicate the student that needs support, in schools that apply the social model (SM), even if only partially. This usage in the quotations of participants is by no means meant to be an interchangeable use of the two terms on the part of the author but intends to enable the reader to understand where the participants’ thoughts and beliefs come from and what practices are in place in their school. Therefore, whether the term SEN or SEND applies, is not a matter of inconsistency or an erroneous and interchangeable use of the terms, but is a reflection of the specific model of inclusion applied in each school.

However, throughout the text of this thesis, the author will be referring to ‘students with disabilities’ for any student identified as in need of support; and other related terms are used with the following meanings:

1. Inclusion: the service of integrating a student in need of support within a mainstream school, used in the generic sense of the term.

2. Inclusive education: practices defined by UNCRPD and DIEPF, using the social model (SM).

3. MM (Medical model) a descriptor of the programme/intervention offered according to the medical model.

4. SEN: (special educational needs) characteristic of an intervention, or of a student in need of support, identified according to MM practices.

For further clarity on other terms in use at the visited schools, Appendix 3 presents a lexicon of the terminology at the UAE federal and at the Dubai government levels. For instance, the terms ‘equity’, ‘barriers’, and ‘special educational needs and disabilities’ (SEND) are concepts elucidated only in DIEPF but lack corresponding terms in the medical model. To add confusion, other terms such as ‘access’, ‘equity’ and ‘disability’, and even IE are used by both models but hold a different meaning in each case.

1.6 Research Questions

I therefore set out in this inquiry to better understand the teachers’ situation. The first research question investigates how similar is teachers’ understanding of IE in all schools, especially with respect to ‘access’ and ‘equity’ since they are all required to abide by the same policy of DIEPF. The rest of the questions aim to examine teacher perspectives and views on the manner their respective schools apply IE (question 2); their judgements of their own abilities to cope (question 3); and factors that hinder the enhancement of their self-efficacy (question 4). Finally, question 5 seeks to highlight the value of teacher self-efficacy in identifying issues in the way inclusion is practiced.

The data gathered was to respond to the first four research questions of this study:

1. What is the teachers’ understanding of Inclusive Education for students with disabilities in low-performing private schools in Dubai?

2. What are teachers’ views on how Inclusive Education is enacted in their low-performing schools?

3. How confident do teachers feel that they possess the abilities to cater for the learning needs of students experiencing disabilities?

4. What factors enhance/reduce teacher self-efficacy in relation to their experience as inclusion practitioners?

5. How effective is the concept of self-efficacy in helping to identify and conceptualise the issues related to Inclusive Education?

The fifth question serves to produce a synthesis of the answers to the first four research questions that project teacher self-efficacy as a measure of issues in inclusion which need to be addressed.

1.7 Teachers' Status in Schools of this Study

IE was adopted in Dubai because it is broadly considered as a reform that supports and welcomes diversity amongst all learners (KHDA, 2017a). Its inclusive pedagogy is intended to eliminate social exclusion by meeting the needs of all learners in a classroom with no discrimination (Florian and Black-Hawkins, 2011; Brennan et al., 2019); and through teaching skills that match the needs of the labour market, prepares students to engage in meaningful and dignified work (UNICEF, 2020). However, to train students for the 21st century skills, which include critical thinking, collaboration, information literacy and other skills, needs teachers who are themselves capable in those areas, as recommended in documents of the Incheon Declaration and SDG4_ Education 2030 Framework for Action (UNESCO, 2016a).

Teachers from countries that have only recently adopted IE and where it is practiced in a variety of ways mostly due to limited resources, need on-going training (Ainscow et al., 2000). In this study, 47 percent of teachers interviewed are from MENA countries, as can be seen in Appendix (1). According to the Arab Regional Education Support Strategy 2016-2021 (UNESCO, 2016b), there is a common and pressing need to achieve a better quality of teacher education in the Arab countries, as there is an increasing requirement to prepare youth for the 21st century skills. In addition, there is a sharp shortage in numbers of teachers in the wider MENA region, estimated at half a million new teaching positions needed to keep up with expected regional demand by 2030 (ibid.). Therefore, to attract and retain individuals in the workforce, teachers will need to be empowered with the

right competencies; and addressing the many school environment factors that can promote teacher self-efficacy in inclusion is a necessity. According to the Social Cognitive Theory, the behaviour of an individual is mutually affected by the influence of the environment and the individual's own cognitive and personal traits (Bandura,1986; Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998). It follows that by making school factors more favourable, teachers' self-efficacy is likely to be enhanced, which can influence their behaviour to undertake more readily the responsibility of IE.

As I was assigned as a member of a KHDA panel during 2012-2015 charged with interviewing applicants for the post of teacher in MoE private schools, this brought me in direct contact with the applicants who were mostly from MENA countries, where the outdated form of inclusion is commonly implemented (Al Khateeb et al., 2016). First-hand information on their professional backgrounds showed they were subject specialists, but seldom with any teaching qualifications as such, and often had limited knowledge of pedagogy. An earlier study in the MENA region also gave the following backing to the above information acquired (Ayyash-Abdo, 2000):

> Teachers do not get equipped with the necessary pre-requisites for their teaching experience and contribute to low school quality.

Hence for teachers in this study, my expectation was that the requirement to cater for students with disabilities exerts augmented demands on their limited pedagogical knowledge and teaching skills for which they were not trained. Therefore, findings of this study relating to the enhancement of teacher self-efficacy are likely to be helpful for other schools with similar contexts elsewhere in the UAE and the MENA region.

A general profile of teachers in these schools is presented in Appendix (1): they are demographically diverse, employed on the basis of a 2-3-year contract, and as non-citizens in the UAE, have no job security, following which many move on elsewhere in search of a better salary. They would often lack the necessary knowledge and skills to work with students with disabilities in mainstream classrooms (Gaad and Khan, 2007), similarly to teachers in other countries (Florian

and Linklater, 2010). Their understandings and practices in IE vary according to their home countries, (Ainscow and Miles, 2009; Al Khateeb et al., 2016), and their attitudes towards IE are often negative due to lack of previous experience with students with disabilities, or to lack of knowledge of what they need to do (Anati, 2012; Alborno and Gaad, 2014), similarly to findings in other countries (Avramidis et al., 2000; de Boer et al., 2010; Savolainen et al., 2012).

The annual teacher turnover varies from 20-48 percent, thus the school decision to invest in training becomes a financial challenge. According to Gaad (2011), as private schools tend to be profit-making businesses, inclusion has not historically been a top priority in the UAE. Also, unlike countries in Europe, (Eurydice, 2004), Dubai private schools are inspected and rated by the government but not allocated any public funds or provided any training; and the strategy used by the school inspections is to identify areas that need improvement as measured against standards of the inspection framework applied in Dubai, following which schools are left on their own to overcome obstacles towards a better rating, and to provide teacher training.

1.8 Terms and Scope of this Study

The scope of this study includes 50 teaching staff from seven of the 33 percent of private schools in Dubai that have been repeatedly rated by the School Inspection teams at KHDA as 'acceptable' or less over at least five years up to 2017-2018. In schools rated as weak in the core tasks of teaching and learning, the admission of students with disabilities is expected to have been met with negative attitudes, as indicated in the literature in many countries (de Boer et al., 2010; Chapman et al., 2011; Savolainen et al., 2012), especially if teachers have not been adequately trained. KHDA data indicate that an improvement occurred in schools rated 'acceptable' or less: in 2014 they consisted of 61 percent of all private schools in Dubai, which dropped to 33 percent in 2018 (KHDA, 2018). This percentage amounted to 57 schools where 100,000 students were enrolled (ibid., p.41), of whom about 2,500 students were estimated to be experiencing disabilities (ibid, p.45). These were schools where until only a few years ago, disability was

stigmatized by the school community (Alghazo and Gaad, 2004), or where admission of students with disabilities in regular schools was not the norm (MoE, 2010). It is therefore questionable how any individual can be confident in his/her abilities to perform a task that requires specialised knowledge and skills if no adequate training has been provided.

It is worth noting that in seeking descriptors to select schools for this study, and in the absence of other means for an objective selection of schools, KHDA school rating provided a fair basis for finding the 'weaker' schools I was seeking. However, the descriptors of 'weak' or 'low performer' are not my personal judgements but are judgements made by the School Inspection Teams. Inspectors are hired based on their extensive experience in school inspections where internationally recognized standards are applied as measures of a quality education. The School Inspection Reports and their ratings are then published on KHDA website to serve two purposes: it provides parents with information for making informed choices for where to enrol their children; and second, it raises the already fierce market competition on student intake, and presumably works as an incentive for schools to improve their provision and thus attract more customers to enrol. In addition, as an incentive to achieve improvement, a school that achieves a rise in its rating becomes eligible to an incremental raise in its tuition fees subject to approval by KHDA (KHDA, 2017b).

Failing to catch up with the desired change entails shortcomings not only at the academic level for the student but is considered by the authority as causing economic consequences for the country, especially as a large portion of students in these schools are Emirati citizens. Among lessons learnt from efforts made in developing countries to focus on human capital as a driver of economic growth is the highlighted importance of developing cognitive skills (Hanushek, 2013) and that the quality of education in a country is viewed as a determinant of economic well-being, since economic growth rates are a direct function of human capital (Hanushek and Woessman, 2020). As IE has been adopted to transform the education system towards developing the learning and skills of all students, the

expected product is an improved human capital. Research findings indicate that economic gains from inclusion in work and employment can lead to increased labour productivity, contributing to a country's GDP and lower spending on social protection programmes (Lamichhane and Sawada, 2009). This is also implied in the UAE Vision 2021 statement showing an interest to produce '*well-rounded citizens*' who can '*contribute positively to society'*.

As an incentive for schools to achieve improvement, KHDA regulations entitle schools to apply for an approval to raise their tuition fees if they attain a higher rating than that of their previous inspection (KHDA, 2017b). As 8-10 new private schools have been established each year in Dubai during the ten-year period of 2008-2018, competition on student intake increases. Hence the expectation is that schools would seek to improve in order to raise the level of their rating. This financial issue is beyond the scope of this study but appears to affect decision-making in schools regarding both hiring specialised staff and provision of teacher training in a manner that shows lack of appreciation of effective IE. Whichever the case, what prevails is that teacher professional development is not at par with the challenges that teachers face in catering to students with disabilities. Ironically, the past decade had witnessed a trend among Emirati parents of moving their children from the free-of-charge public schools to the fee-charging private schools in Dubai in search for what was perceived as a better quality of education (Kenaid, 2011; KHDA and CfBT, 2012). However, to make the situation more complex for parents of students with disabilities, historically, private schools had been applying the federal law below, which stipulates that the fees and cost of study for students with disabilities are charged to the parents of that student:

> 'School fees for students with disabilities must not exceed the total cost of the regular school fees as approved in the school fees structure for students who do not have disabilities, plus an additional 50% of the regular school fees.' (MoE, School for All, 2010, p.53).

The same law also stipulates the following:

> 'The student must be enrolled and registered as a student with special needs with an IEP [Individualised Educational Programme], and this will be maintained in his certificate.' (ibid.).

The above are two examples of a law that contradicts the principle of equity in inclusive education and hence are viewed as stigmatisation by Dubai policies.

To capture in-depth data on teachers' views and beliefs, a mixed-methods methodology was used because together, the use of qualitative and quantitative methods provides a 'powerful mix' (Miles et al., 2014 p.44) and a better understanding of the research problem. It is also a context-situated multiple- case inquiry (Yin, 2003; Stake, 2006) because there are seven schools offering any of three types of curricula. Interviews, focus group meetings, and a survey provided the qualitative data; and the survey enabled to quantify the types of responses. The collective data gathered were triangulated with information from the School Inspection Reports of the concerned schools, available on KHDA website (www.khda.gov.ae).

Dubai private schools present a unique opportunity to examine teachers' views on inclusion, due to the diversity of school cultures in place, within the same geographic entity and accountable to the same government regulations. Such a variety make a good case study to investigate teacher self-efficacy, an aspect that seldom received attention in MENA countries.

1.9 Statement of the Problem: Conceptual Framework

The framework of this study aims to inform an analysis that elucidates teachers' confidence in their abilities to cope with inclusive education within their specific low-performing school environments. Such frameworks serve as a road-map for the items to be investigated, and help to decide on the research methodology to use (Trafford and Leshem, 2008). Especially when the topic of the study aims to gather data on thoughts, views and experience of individuals, and many personal and environmental factors are expected to be at play, the framework presents a blueprint against which to compare the empirical findings and the connections between those factors. In addition, the framework includes constructs recognized by the research literature for their impact on teacher self-efficacy, combined with some indicators of inclusion from the Index for Inclusion (Booth and Ainscow, 2002), and

from the Social Cognitive Theory; while Policy Enactment is the gateway to verifying where schools are situated in their implementation of inclusion in alignment with internationally recognised policies such as UNCRPD and SDG4.

The Conceptual Framework also forms the backbone of the research questions, and helps to decide on the research design that would best fit the purpose of the study and the elucidation of in-depth data from participants within the short time span of 45-50 minute encounters. Moreover, since the Conceptual Framework is built on findings from other studies in the literature, a comparison of the results of this study with the constructs in the framework can provide a visionary presentation of the new insights from this study on the dynamics of their interaction with the teacher.

The concepts in the framework of this study contextualize how teachers' confidence in their abilities is affected when challenged to cope with inclusive education within their specific low-performing school environments. Against a background of weaknesses in the basic functions of a school, the admission of increasing numbers of students with disabilities is expected to have created still greater challenges for teachers. Leaning on the one hand on knowledge acquired through my personal experience, whether as a practicing teacher or from a regulator perspective; and on the other hand, on related theories and research findings in the literature, the figure presents a roadmap of the factors that are generally recognized as affecting the formation of a teacher's views. The research questions are intended to elicit the expected interaction between the teacher and the factors identified in the framework; and are intended to make sense of an expected complex picture emanating from the views and beliefs of fifty participants. According to Miles and Huberman (1994, p.440) a conceptual framework

> 'lays out the key factors, constructs, or variables, and presumes relationships among them'.

Figure (1) below indicates the factors in the conceptual framework of this study, which affect teacher self-efficacy. On the left side of a teacher's self-efficacy as the central topic of the study, are factors relating to the internal environment of a

school; and on the right side are other external factors a teacher needs to respond to. The arrows show the type of reciprocal interaction with these factors as posited by the Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1997; Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998). This would include the complex policy arena outlined above. The outcome may be either a strengthened or a weakened self-efficacy, depending on how well planned to achieve the purpose of an enhanced self-efficacy.

An enhanced self-efficacy is bound to have a strong impact on student learning outcomes, but this is moderated by personal traits of the individual teacher. Moreover, when all the school environment factors are weak, the only remaining factor to lean on for strengthening teacher self-efficacy is the personal interest and motivation of the teacher.

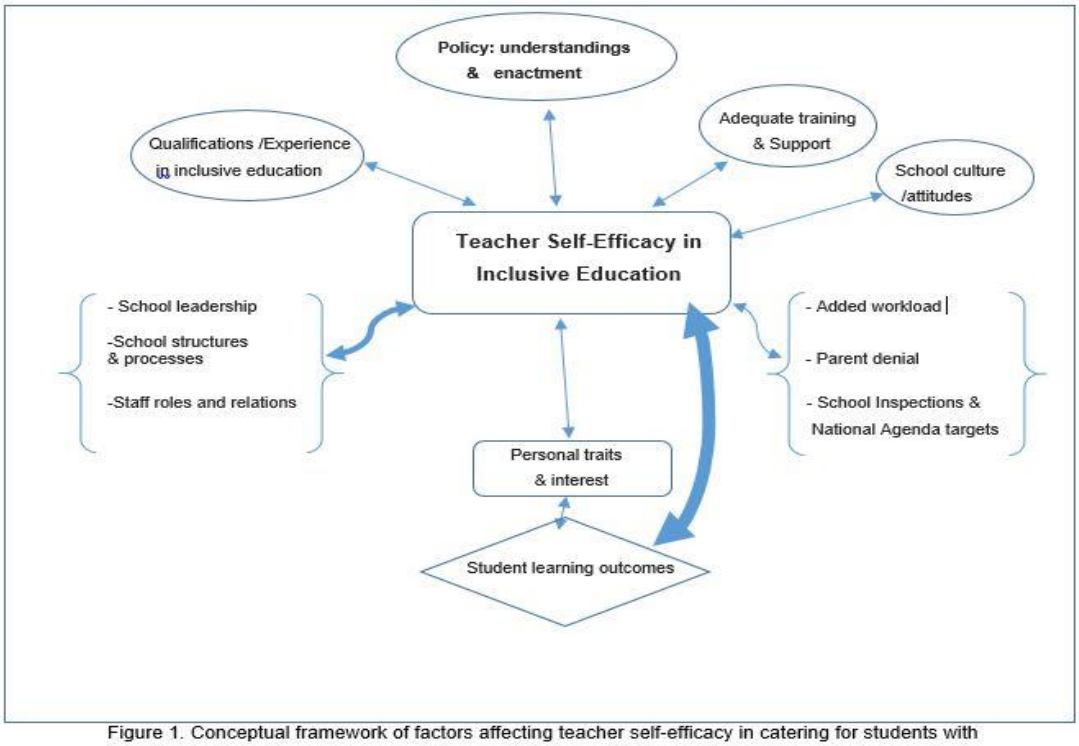

Figure 1. Conceptual framework of factors affecting teacher self-efficacy in catering for students with disabilities.

1.9.1 **Theories underlying the Conceptual Framework**

Two theories underpin the conceptual framework of this study, as the knowledge gathered on teacher self-efficacy within it is closely linked to the postulates of both theories.

1.9.1.1 Policy Enactment Theory

The Theory of Policy Enactment by Stephen Ball et al. (2012) forms part of the conceptual framework of this study, as it has an indirect influence on teacher self-efficacy. According to this theory, enacting a policy involves two stages: the first stage involves the reading, understanding and interpretation of the policy; and the second stage is its re-reading and 'enacting', i.e., translating the policy contents into actions, in the form of school plans, instructional methods, and various channels of communication with the school community (ibid.). Enabling the active participation of teachers in each stage can create clarity and common understanding of the policy requirements and reduce or eliminate any negative attitudes that usually arise when clarity is missing. Discussing a policy with teaching staff can lead to creating a common understanding of its content by all staff, and of the responsibilities or roles assigned to each.

Research findings have indicated that teacher knowledge of disability legislation reported higher levels of self-efficacy (Sharma et al., 2014; Nuo et al., 2016). Although mandated change generally creates negative attitudes (Hargreaves, 2004), but when teachers participate in discussing and co-planning the steps to be carried out, a greater ownership is felt with positive emotional experiences, similar to those linked with self-initiated change, which in many cases, actually has a legislated, mandated origin (ibid.). Hence, what matters for teachers is the manner in which a policy is communicated and their contribution in planning actions to ensure their ownership.

Unlike laws and other policies that are often high-level statements but do not provide guidance on what to do, the DIEPF is a 55-page policy document produced as a good practice guide for schools and stakeholders in the implementation of IE, based on the social model (KHDA, 2017a). It defines the roles of all school staff and provides recommended procedures for inclusion to be effective. Therefore, when a school fails to show improvement, this raises many questions, particularly regarding whether and how school leadership communicate the policy to teachers, since they are the agents that enact the policy on the ground. This study looks into how the enactment of policies in the schools visited links to teacher self-efficacy.

1.9.1.2 The Social Cognitive Theory

Self-efficacy is a construct founded in the Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) and was initially defined as

> 'Beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments' (Bandura, 1977, p.3).

The theory postulates that a belief is formed within a process called *triadic reciprocal causation*, where three interrelated forces are at play, and have a reciprocal effect on one another. The forces are the environment; the individual's behavior; and personal factors such as cognitive, affective, and biological or cognitive traits. Especially where major changes need to be introduced in a school to effectively accommodate inclusion, research indicates that if teachers do not adopt or actively practice the change, the school reform will be superficial or even fail (Fullan, 2007). According to the SCT postulated by Bandura (1986), the stronger the teachers' beliefs in change, the greater the enhancement of their attitudes towards accepting and adopting that change.

The SCT suggests the activities through which effective learning occurs: through vicarious experiences (observation, retention, and imitation of performance of more experienced individuals); through verbal persuasion and support from others; and through personal performance and accomplishment, which promotes a sense of mastery of the desired outcome, and is recognized as the most powerful learning experience (Bandura,1997). Self-efficacy is concerned with perceived capability, which affects behaviour and outcome expectations, and depends on the individual's beliefs in how one is able to perform (Bandura, 2006). Achievement of success has a reciprocal effect on self-efficacy and raises further the perception of mastery of the task (ibid.). It follows that a key school task must be to develop the means within which teachers feel supported as well as challenged in exploring ways to facilitate the learning of all students (Chapman et al., 2011).

Further on, Tschannen-Moran et al. (1998) built on Bandura's work and suggested that teacher self-efficacy is the outcome of a teacher's analysis of the task at hand and its desired outcome: and the perception of one's personal skill to accomplish the task, even with students who may be difficult or unmotivated. Such

perceptions guide behaviour, especially change behaviour (ibid.). Applying this theory to teachers catering to the learning needs of students with disabilities means that teachers need clarity regarding the instructional task involved, its objectives and desired outcomes to make a self-judgment of their abilities. When such clarity is lacking, it is questionable how self-efficacious teachers can feel. Therefore, for teacher behavioural change to occur, attention to those factors that enhance self-efficacy is warranted.

All these types of learning experiences occur within a social setting, where the nature of interaction with individuals in the school environment can either strengthen or weaken beliefs in one's ability (Henson, 2001). School leadership is widely recognized as a major factor for environment to be effective (Leo & Barton, 2006; Ainscow and Miles, 2009; Chapman et al., 2011), due to the impact school leaders have on teachers in inclusion practices. This occurs not only through verbal support given as feedback, as indicated in this theory, but also beyond, by ensuring on-going support and guidance, and that school processes and structures are adapted to support the teacher's role in inclusion; and where opportunities are made available for developing pertinent teaching skills.

1.10 My Personal Situation

As starting points for my study, two sources of knowledge led to my choice of the topic of this study: having participated as a member of the School Inspection teams at KHDA during 2011-2014, I was aware of the educational shortcomings of the schools that were rated as 'acceptable' or less. Moreover, my participation during 2017 and 2018 in monitoring and assessing developmental initiatives for schools at KHDA brought me in direct contact with schools and teachers. This enabled me to begin with some sense of the reasons behind the low ratings of these schools. For this study, looking at phenomena through the lens of a researcher rather than a school inspector was a challenge that may have been a source of personal bias, but my awareness of this positionality made me focus on the purpose of the research. Aware that my interview questions could be biased; and that following introducing myself as an employee at KHDA, the participants' responses may also be biased, I

made a point of repeating to the interviewees a summary of their responses and requested their feedback on whether I had accurately captured their views and beliefs, as a verification strategy to ensure rigour and trustworthiness are maintained in the qualitative data gathered that give substance to this study (Morse et al., 2002).

My interpretation of the repeatedly low school ratings is that to achieve improvement, a different strategy needs to be tried other than using school rating and the financial incentive of raising tuition fees, as these do not appear to be working. My interest in conducting this inquiry was therefore to gather in-depth data from a teacher perspective on aspects that need to be addressed to enhance their self-efficacy and to speed up improvement of the teachers' and schools' provision.

I am also aware that the school ratings should be considered with some reservation, as the school inspection criteria do not include an evaluation of the extent of challenge teachers face in these schools with limited resources or the impact of their empathetic approach to SEND students which research shows is essential in their teaching-learning interaction (Barr, 2013). To create the teacher-student bond that is a necessary pre-requisite for a student with learning difficulties may be making demanding efforts on teachers, especially when parent cooperation is often lacking. This emotional rapport was evident with several teachers in this study whenever they referred to their students as '*my child'* and expressed their pride in the progress the students would have achieved. Also, the burden some parents impose on teachers is never taken into account: teachers reported that parents often think that a private school for which they are paying tuition fees, is entirely responsible for their child's development. Nevertheless, the school ratings are relatively fair considering they are judgements of professional inspectors with a wide expertise and are relied upon by the government for producing laws and policies.

1.10.1 Author's Background

Any assumptions made at the outset of this study are not based on mere intuition, but rather on an experience in education that extends initially during three decades at various levels from teacher to school principal, to administrative posts at ministerial level and as Director of Education for Nablus District in Palestine. The various posts I filled during this stage of my professional journey enabled me to experience the process of education from different perspectives within the national system of education as: a teacher; a school principal; school inspector; a regulator, and as a member of the national team assigned to review existing policies, processes and posts in the education system in preparation for a prospective reform of the whole system. Alongside, I also filled the roles of training teachers in pedagogy; curriculum development; coaching school principals in conducting a critical and realistic school self-evaluation and in drawing and monitoring their school improvement plans; reviewed tools for assessment of student learning and contributed to the enhancement of the development of students' higher cognitive skills by re-structuring national assessment questionnaires.

At the level of international relations, I filled the role of coordinator of school development initiatives such as twinning between schools in Palestine with schools in France and Norway; and I played a role in the development of the activities of the United World Colleges conducted in Palestine to promote education and peace. The above list constitutes achievements worthy of being noted because they were accomplished too often under adverse and highly challenging conditions of life under military occupation, where human effort is drained over issues of crisis-management and people are engaged in devising ways to overcome the obstacles it imposes that impede educational reform.

During the last 12 years, my diverse roles at KHDA in Dubai brought me to interact with schools that host teaching staff from all continents. This was within my capacity as school inspector; national project manager for TIMSS and PISA during 2007-2009; conducting research for informed decision-making at KHDA;

participating in the quality assurance of higher education institutions in Dubai; and as assessor of the impact of some of the school development initiatives of KHDA.

Throughout these tasks, my observation was that many of the challenges teachers face are usually located within the structure, organisation, and processes of a school. Among the common teacher concerns is their personal professional growth vis a vis the increasing demands on their skills to produce student cohorts with 21st century skills. Yet although teachers are widely recognized as 'capable of human agency or taking intentional pursuit of courses of action' (Bandura,1977,1997), only few efforts have been made to voice their views and respond to their needs, an aspect that is bound to affect their motivation and resilience in response to increasing requirements in education as in SDG4 (UNESCO, 2016).

1.11 Summary

To produce desired outcomes when performing a task, a practitioner needs to have knowledge of the objectives to achieve, and the skills to plan and execute the task accordingly. For a task that requires specialised skills to implement processes at professional standards and use strategies for which no pertinent training is provided, the challenge is greater still and the self-confidence to deliver is at stake.

Especially in the case of teachers, with young and vulnerable students at the receiving end, the self-confidence of a teacher in how best to handle the responsibility cannot be under-estimated. This study aims to contribute insight on ways to enhance teacher self-efficacy in attending to such a responsibility to help schools improve their inclusion provision.

1.12 Layout of the Thesis

Following the background information in this introduction, Chapter Two is the Literature Review, with current knowledge in the literature on the main concepts in this study, and on research findings of the factors and good practices that can enhance teacher self-efficacy. In addition, a review of the existing laws and policies related to inclusion provision; and the evolvement of the definitions and understandings of inclusion at the international, regional and UAE levels set the

stage for understanding the forces at play in Dubai private schools. Chapter Three provides the Methodology and research methods used; followed by Chapter Four on the empirical Findings of this study; and ends with Chapter Five on Analysis of the findings.

2 CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The first chapter of this study, section 2.1 describes the development of legislation related to inclusion in the UAE, as terms of reference for the implementation of inclusion since inclusion became mandatory in 2014, followed by section 2.2 on the evolving meaning of inclusion cultures worldwide and in the MENA region as homelands of teachers in Dubai private schools. Section 2.3 provides knowledge from the literature on the importance of teacher attitudes and their self-efficacy in inclusive education (IE). Next is section 2.4 to illustrate how an entity with dual legislation can affect policy enactment of inclusions in private schools; and section 2.5 is a brief review of the different models of inclusion implemented in Dubai and elsewhere in the world. The sections that follow engage in information on each of the main factors that affect teacher self-efficacy in implementing inclusive education: section 2.6 is about school leadership; section 2.7 is about school-staff relationships; section 2.8 deals with school inspections; and section 2.9 is about the role of parents. Finally, section 2.10 is a summary of the literature review.

2.1.1 Legal Background affecting this Study

At the time this study was conducted in May 2019, inclusive education had only been mandated five years earlier for all schools, both public and private, in the education system of the UAE federation, of which Dubai is a leading emirate. The federal legislation in the UAE is the overarching and binding umbrella for all seven emirates in the country; while other local emirate-level laws may be added as the individual emirate's policy, they would generally be around the execution of these laws. Already in 2012, KHDA, the Dubai government arm responsible for the growth and quality of the private education sector of Dubai, had liaised with schools and parents to draw their attention to the coming implementation of inclusive education and introduced guidance and criteria for schools to follow.

Underlying the UAE laws and policies that relate to the implementation of inclusion is the over-arching strategic plan UAE Vision2021 issued in a Cabinet

meeting in 2010, which maps the vision into six national priorities, amongst which are:

- 'United in Knowledge: developing a competitive knowledge economy;
- United in Responsibility: a cohesive society and preserved identity.'

Accordingly, the target set for the UAE education system was to be 'celebrating in 2021 by being among countries that provide world-class education' (KHDA, ACTVET, ADEC, and MoE, 2015, p.11),

Following the UAE ratification in 2008 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities(UNCRPD), Dubai government went a few steps further issuing laws, initiatives and policies that required private schools in Dubai to focus their efforts on the learning needs of students experiencing disabilities as they were previously often stigmatized by the community (Alghazo and Gaad, 2004) and the implementation of inclusive education became mandatory in 2014 for all private schools in Dubai. The government of Dubai elaborated on its adopted inclusive education principles as follows (KHDA, 2018, p.43):

> 'The development of a fully inclusive system of education is a key enabler of educational excellence and is central in establishing a fully cohesive society - when we improve the quality of inclusion within our schools, we improve education for all.'

However, according to previous federal regulations (MoE,2010, p.22) students with disabilities integrated in mainstream classes are entitled to:

> 'receive special education programs and services outside of the regular classroom, but in the school setting… along a continuum from least-to-most restrictive learning environments'.

The class or subject teacher provides instruction for all students, and another member of staff supports the student within a separate individualized instruction (ibid.).

Following the UAE ratification of the UNCRPD, the federal UAE government formally adopted inclusive education because its principles were viewed as enabling to achieve the UAE's target of its strategic plan Vision 2021 to provide a world-class education that is 'responsive to national needs and aligned to international

standards' (KHDA, ACVTET, ADEC, and MoE, 2015, p.7), and the UAE Centennial vision for 2071 for long-term develop (KHDA, 2018). To that end, the National Agenda, an extension of Vision2021, provides further specific objectives to be achieved by 2021, concerning students, teachers, and school leaderships, as outlined in the UAE School Inspection Framework (SIF) (ibid.), using internationally accepted standards to measure performance of what are viewed as quality outcomes for the education system (ibid.):

1. 'Students: to be among the highest performing countries on the league tables of students' international assessments, i.e., among the 20 highest performing in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA); and among the 15 highest performing countries in Trends in Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS).
2. Teachers: To ensure that 100 percent of schools have high quality teachers;
3. School Leaderships: To ensure that 100 percent of **public** schools have highly-effective school leadership.'

For a country that hosts communities of diverse nationalities and schools offering any of 17 different education curricula, these criteria of quality outcomes may be justified as a shared basis for comparing the provision of all schools. However, the criteria miss out in capturing the IE holistic principles of equity in quality, thus arouse some reservations: the first standard prescribes exclusion rather than inclusion, since students experiencing disabilities have usually been excluded from participating in the international assessments (TIMSS and PISA) as the length and format of the assessment questionnaires may be discriminating against them. Moreover, 'high quality teachers' is a term that is not defined, especially with regard to students with disabilities; and the distinction between public and private schools is a deviation from the international standards and principles of equity in quality for all as indicated by SDG4 (UNESCO, 2016). The third standard rightfully indicates the importance of school leadership, which many studies have identified as a crucial element for ensuring inclusion is effective for creating a welcoming school ethos for all students, and by providing the right resources and support for all (Spillane et al, 2001; Weisel and Dror, 2006; Chapman et al., 2011; Kin et al., 2018). However, (SIF) refers to leaderships only of public school, thus presenting another example of exclusion from the education system by

counting out private schools in such a basic requirement of an organization that also implements inclusion.

Inclusive education principles were adopted by the UAE in 2014 as they aim to make teaching more effective to achieve the objective of excellence in education (KHDA,2018); but at the same time, required schools to focus their efforts on students with disabilities.

This mandate to introduce inclusion in UAE private schools presented a big change in the student composition for which adequate preparation and teacher training are needed. Research findings indicate that in-service teachers, also called general or subject teachers, are the main agents in the implementation of any educational reform (Avramidis et al.,2019). Teachers' attitudes towards inclusion are shaped by their knowledge about disability (Kurniawati et al.,2017), and attitudes are generally known to affect behaviour (Urton et al., 2014). With adequate training and knowledge acquisition, teachers' attitudes are generally positively influenced (de Boer et al., 2010; Sokal and Sharma, 2014; Nuo et al. 2016). When their efforts produce improved student outcomes, (Malmberg et al., 2014), this in turn usually enhances teacher self-efficacy.

Soon after the establishment of the UAE in 1972, following the rapid rise in the number of private schools in Dubai, with 57 new schools established during 2011-2019 (KHDA Open data), greater attention was then directed towards quality of provision. Schools rated 'good' were 39 percent in 2014, and rose to to 61 percent in 2018 (KHDA, 2018). However, this means that about one third of all private schools were still lagging behind. The online School Inspection Reports of these low-performing schools indicate that teaching was generally ineffective, and teachers showed limited knowledge in pedagogy. For such schools, the introduction of inclusive education is likely to have presented a big challenge, as it requires changes in belief, attitude and teaching practices. (Chapman et al. 2011).

The literature of local research includes two studies conducted ten years back in public schools, showing the following results: in one study, teachers generally viewed students with disabilities as lacking the skills to master the course content of

a curriculum; the majority of teachers preferred the traditional special education service models over full inclusive practices, and were not in favour of the presence of students with disabilities in their classrooms. Their concern was regarding the added load of work to prepare Action Plans that respond to the specific needs of every student with disability, makes catering to all students in a mainstream classroom hard to achieve (Gaad and Khan, 2007). Another nationwide UAE study on teachers' views on the implementation of inclusive education found that teachers have concerns because they usually had not been trained in inclusion practices, and need guidance (Gaad & Thabet, 2009), a belief still shared with many teachers in this study and with other teachers in different school contexts elsewhere in the world (Savolainen et al., 2012). They reported a sense of 'fear' and 'apprehension' which is linked to the potential repercussions of failure and blame for not delivering as required by the regulations. (Gaad 2004b; Gaad and Khan, 2007; Alborno and Gaad, 2014). Therefore, the assumption made in this study is that teachers in such circumstances, and those judged by the School Inspection teams at KHDA as low-performing, would have low self-confidence in their abilities to cope with inclusion.

Therefore, the research questions of this study aim to investigate whether teachers in these schools feel self-confident in their abilities in inclusive education; whether their views and attitudes towards inclusive education are aligned with Dubai policies; and what factors affect their self-efficacy. Given the research findings in other countries, which increasingly indicate the positive impact of teacher self-efficacy on the learning of students experiencing disabilities (Avramidis and Norwich, 2002; Forlin and Chambers, 2011), the purpose of this multiple-case study aims to gain insights on how teacher self efficacy in such schools may be enhanced to achieve a more effective inclusion provision.

2.2 The Development of Inclusive Education

An important milestone in the history of mankind was the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) proclaimed by the United Nations General Assemby in 1948. Article 26 recognised the right to education as a basic human right for all, and thus formed the foundation for inclusion further on.

2.2.1 **The evolving meaning of inclusion**

International attention was first drawn to the rights of persons with disabilities by UNESCO at the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education, at the 1994 World Conference on Special Needs Education held in Spain, as a means to eliminate discriminatory attitudes against individuals with disabilities. The major concept introduced was about the role of inclusion, and in later UN documents, determined as 'the identification and removal of barriers',… both '*to* and *in* learning' (UNESCO, 2015).

This statement introduces the concept that 'barriers' impede student learning, rather than being an inherent trait of weakness, and is a clear move from the old meaning of a mere integration/placement of students whose abilities were considered as limited compared to their peers, hence applied a SEN programme as a separate instruction of students with disabilities (Lewis and Norwich, 2005). Such a practice of exclusion is currently viewed as discriminating against students with disabilities and is no longer accepted by Dubai government. Instead, effective teaching is viewed as that which is effective for all students (Ainscow et al. 2013), and that 'the more important agenda is about how to develop a pedagogy that is inclusive of all learners' (Davis and Florian, 2004). The statement does not mention where and how to provide such a pedagogy, which is likely an intended gap to provide flexibility, but in many countries it appears to be applied with the social interaction of all learners as the primary objective.

Further on in 2006, Article 24 of UNCRPD focuses on access and equity as the basic principles in a rights-based approach to education, thus maximizing both the academic and social development of students. Its recommended practices included the following: that accommodation of students with inabilities in mainstream schools should never be decided by a medical diagnosis of a child's impairment; that teachers need to be trained so they can work effectively in an inclusive environment; and that inclusion is cost-cutting as it produces individuals with an education who are economically more capable of being self-dependent. (UNCRPD, 2006). The UAE therefore ratified the UNCRPD as its principles were viewed as the

means to reform the education system to enable the realization of a knowledge-based economy. Accordingly, DIEPF requires schools to provide the following:

> '…create a culture of collaboration, in a landscape of mutual respect and equality for all. All students are given opportunities to be successful learners, to form positive social relationships with peers, and to become fully participating members of the learning community' (KHDA, 2017a, p.10).

As all private schools in Dubai are required to comply with DIEPF, the expectation was that the schools visited in this study in 2019 would be showing steps towards implementing the policy.

UNICEF elaborates further on Article 24 of the UNCRPD impact on education, and in the below definition adds guidance on changes that need to be made in the school system to support and enable the development of the full potential of students:

> **'Inclusion**: education environments that adapt the design and physical structures, teaching methods, and curriculum as well as the culture, policy and practice of education environments so that they are accessible to all students without discrimination. Placing students with disabilities within mainstream classes without these adaptations does not constitute inclusion.' (UNICEF, 2017. p.3)

However, the definition does not indicate whether occasional pull-out is not accepted. The variety of practices that emerged in countries to implement UNCRPD show that pull-out is in place in various countries: for instance, in the United States of America (USA), students with specific learning difficulties (SLD) are classified into three levels (tiers1-3) of response to intervention (RTI) and placement. Students in Tier 2 in mainstream schools are given interventions of individual support or within small-group instruction; while students in Tier 1 are in a typical placement where special education is likely (Heinemann et al., 2017).

In contrast, the formal stand of countries in the European Union rejects any type of segregation or exclusion of learners for whatever reason, and prioritises the social outcomes of education, such as employment opportunities, with the resulting reduction of poverty levels and crime (European Parliament website, 2017). In Canada, where during the past 5 years various efforts related to equity and inclusion have emerged in several provinces of the country, student placement is

mostly in regular classrooms, with varying levels of “pull out” service provision or segregated classes (Whitley and Hollweck,2020). This variety of inclusion practices in countries with a long experience in inclusion suggests that the flexibility allowed in applying pull-out is preferred to practices of integrated placement for all students at all times.

Another milestone in the history of inclusion was the Education 2030: Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action for the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4): ‘Towards inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all’ (UNESCO, 2016). SDG4 relies on education as the basis for realizing other goals relating to human rights, as it is one of the major pillars of development and socio-economic mobility through opportunities for employment and towards eradicating poverty and hunger (UNESCO 2016). As a document, SGD4 elaborates further on from UNCRPD principles by emphasizing the importance of support and adequate training for teachers in inclusion.

The UNCRPD indicates principles and values to be observed but lacks internationally agreed models for how to implement inclusion (Watkins et al., 2009). However, placement for the social inclusion of SEN children appears to be the most frequent criterion of inclusive education in these countries, while the quality of teaching and learning processes takes lower priority (Haug,2017). Therefore, there have even been controversial views regarding the implementation of inclusion worldwide. A European study has shown that no country has yet succeeded in constructing school models that live up to the ideals of inclusion (ibid.), and placement is devised for the student with disability, but is referred to as ‘social development’ or the social integration of students with disabilities (ibid.). Proponents of inclusion argue that the presence of students with disabilities together with their peers in the same mainstream classroom contributes to more effective teaching, (Armstrong et al., 2011), and list several benefits for students of all abilities. Italy is a case in point where it was tried and has not really succeeded for a number of reasons. Portugal is also moving in that way direction; New Brunswick in Canada

has moved also and espouses success but there is some pull-out, or reduced schooling days.

Studies on including students with disabilities (also referred to as SEN, for short) in a mainstream setting show positive academic outcomes across education levels compared to students in special education (OECD, 2020). An example are findings of such a study in Mathematics and languages in the Netherlands; and likewise regarding the rest of the students in the class regarding mainstreaming students with SEN: evidence shows neutral to positive effects of mainstreaming (ibid.). The explanation given for these results was that the presence of students with SEN in a mainstream class commits teachers to diversify and adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of all students, thus all students benefit (ibid.). Research findings confirm that teachers need to be well equipped with the right teaching skills and competencies to achieve such results, (Nuo et al., 2016), while the opposite is likely to be true when teachers are not trained to deliver in such situations.

Another example of success in inclusion is from Ontario, Canada: students with SEN enrolled in mainstream settings, show better performance in 'social acceptance, social skills, friendship ties, self-esteem, loneliness and depression' (OECD, 2020, p.19). The unique and long experience of this province dates back to 1986, when Bill 85 was issued, a mandate which devised and implemented a model of inclusive schooling in public schools for all students (Aucoin et al., 2020). UNESCO noted that among the key aspects that contributed to the success of the model in New Brunswick was:

> "….the outstanding example of mentoring and professional learning for inclusive education, and a model of excellence in a public education system that has inspired other countries" (UNESCO 2014, in Aucoin et al., 2020, p.315).

(the inverted commas "…" are from the original reference).

A lesson learnt from the success of the New Brunswick model is the active engagement of several stakeholders in taking the necessary time and thought to

construct and implement a model that introduces big changes in the operations of an educational institution.

According to a recent report of OECD (2020), several countries in Europe have made additional efforts lately by establishing governmental entities to support the objectives of equity and inclusion for students with disabilities: France introduced a new plan in 2019-2020 to provide school and district-level support services for students with disabilities and for their families; and Ireland set up the Special Education Section. Likewise, in Ontario, Canada, the Advisory Council on Special Education serves a similar purpose. However, Austria and Norway adopt a case-by-case approach, only providing a broad definition of special education needs.

Among the critical elements to achieve effective inclusion as indicated in UNCRPD calls for strong on-going support for teachers: an example can be given from the European Commission in its undertaking to provide

> '…the content and teaching methods of special needs education (SEN) within their borders, including the curriculum for training SEN teachers or methodologies for drafting individual educational plans' (Schuman, 2017, p.5).

However, in an environment where teachers are not well prepared and lack the right support and guidance they need, then all students could be at a disadvantage due to inefficient use of human resources (Sharma et al. 2011). As a result, there is an international move to train all teachers to be inclusive/SEN teachers: CRPD mentions a key strategy in Article 4 of the CRPD 'to promote the training of professionals and staff working with persons with disabilities … so as to better provide the assistance and services guaranteed by those rights.'

As yet, close to three decades following the Salamanca Statement in 1994, many countries have still not qualified to the description of establishing an 'inclusive' education system, as indicated in the Global Education Monitoring Report (UNESCO 2020) and would still be farther away from achieving SDG4. Among a list of reasons are the lack of teacher support, multiple but inconsistent laws, and policies that are not being enacted(ibid.). Based on unpublished data at KHDA indicating that a large portion of teachers in private schools had not received any

courses in inclusion, my assumption at the onset of this inquiry was that the issue of low school rating in overall education provision and in inclusion is situated above all with the teachers, and as a result, expected that teachers would have low self-efficacy in their abilities to meet the challenges of inclusion.

At the other extreme, not all educators have been in favour of applying inclusion in schools, and were apprehensive of how teaching and the learning of 'regular' students in the classroom would be affected by the presence of students with SEN. Also when teachers are not adequately trained to handle students of diverse abilities together in the same classroom, the disabled students would not be receiving the specialized care they need, and their peers' education would be constantly disrupted (Lieberman,1992), which highlights challenges of this policy in private schools in Dubai. Accordingly, their view is that to actually address inclusion, various options besides the mainstream classroom need to be allowed as per the needs of the individual students. Lyon & Vaughn (1994, p.15), argued that attention to the individual student can more easily be achieved outside the regular classroom, e.g., in a resource room, either separately or within small group settings, a view that resonates with the UAE federal law (MoE, 2010). In addition, parents of students with severe disabilities have concerns that their children may be ridiculed by others in a mainstream class.

2.2.2 Inclusion in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Region

A review of research studies conducted between 1990-2014 on inclusion practices in the Arab countries indicates that the understanding of inclusion by the various sectors of policy-makers, education professionals, researchers and parents in Arab countries is by no means uniform (Alkhateeb et al.,2016). Policies generally define inclusion as a strategy of education for all, but its relevant practices are not enacted. In education systems it is perceived as a placement in mainstream classes, and usually only certain types of disabilities are enrolled in an ordinary school setting (ibid.). Also, there is no consensus on the definition of inclusion, its nature, and its scope (Gaad, 2011; Anati, 2012; Weber, 2012;). Inclusion terminology in MENA countries may not hold the same meanings and contexts as

those described in international literature (Almuhareb,2007; Aldaihani, 2011). For instance, terms such as ‘normalization’, ‘integration’, ‘mainstreaming’, ‘least restrictive environment’, and ‘inclusion’ are still reported to be used interchangeably (Al Zyoudi, 2006; Gaad, 2011; Al Khateeb et al., 2016).

At the social level, various groups showed negative attitudes towards individuals with disabilities (Arif & Gaad, 2008; AlKhateeb et al., 2016), including pre-service and in-service teachers alike (Gaad, 2004a; Al Zyoudi et al., 2011). Teachers with more positive views showed a ‘conditional belief’ acknowledging education as a right for all (Sheikh, 2016), but feared they did not possess the knowledge or skills to implement inclusion and were therefore apprehensive of the repercussions of blame and failure (Gaad and Khan, 2007; Alborno and Gaad, 2014).

Inclusion practices in these countries are still in their early developmental stages, focusing mostly on the service of a separate special education needs instruction. Such a perception may not fit with the requirements of DIEPF, and the expectation is that in schools visited in this study, teachers’ self-efficacy in inclusion is low, since many of the participants were from the MENA and east Asian countries; and teachers’ attitudes are usually a reflection of any experience or learning environments to which they may have been exposed (Sharma et al., 2014).

Other regional studies have shown that uncertainty in teachers’ personal judgements of their abilities towards inclusion depends on the nature and severity of the disabling condition presented to them (Gaad,2004a); the length of teaching experience, and the relevance of their training (Al Zyoudi, 2006), suggesting areas that need to be addressed to enhance teacher self-efficacy in inclusion. Teachers in other countries expressed similar concerns regarding inclusion and their need for (Avramidis and Norwich, 2010; de Boer et al., 2011; Savolainen et al., 2012); and all teachers pointed to their need for training tailored to help them find solutions to the challenges they face; and for specialist support to help in overcoming their stress and fears and to create positive teacher attitudes towards inclusion (Anati, 2013). Research findings elsewhere indicate teachers in other countries expressed similar

needs for training to enhance their self-efficacy (Avramidis et al., 2000; de Boer et al., 2010; Leyser et al., 2011).

2.2.3 Inclusive Education in the United Arab Emirates (UAE)

During more than three decades since the 1970s, educational services provided for the 'disabled' in the UAE were public institutions called Centres for Preparation and Rehabilitation for the Handicapped (Sheikh, 2015). However, following the UAE ratification of UNCRPD in 2008, the government showed a growing attention to produce further laws and regulations that were bound to raise the awareness of the rights and needs of individuals with disabilities: the UAE strategic plan, Vision 2021 (UAE, 2010) set the stage for what schools need to achieve to harness the full potential of its human capital towards achieving a diversified and flexible knowledge-based economy. The unified UAE School Inspection Framework (SIF) was produced in 2015 to move education closer to Vision2021 and highlighted four main areas listed below for School Inspections to focus on, which were precisely areas indicated in the School Inspection Reports of the schools in this study published on KHDA website (khda.gov.ae) that many schools were struggling with and are directly related to an effective implementation of IE:

a) **The UAE National Agenda:** this document forms part of the UAE strategic plan, Vision 2021, and identifies specific targets to be achieved by 2021, amongst which are the prevalence of a 'highly effective school leadership', and 'high-quality teachers'; to be amongst the 15 highest performers in TIMSS, and amongst the 20 highest performers in PISA by the year 2021(KHDA, ACTVET,ADEC and MoE, 2015, pp. 11-14).

b) **Innovation in Education**, and promoting a culture of innovation in schools;

c) **Inclusion**: (defined in Chapter One, section 1.5)

d) **School Self-evaluation**. As a presumably on-going school process throughout the year, participation of teachers in a school self-evaluation is an exercise from which teachers can learn to critically reflect on the school plan and make the transfer to

formulating similar questions for the self-evaluation of their own provision (Ainscow and Miles,2009); to establish professional measures and processes, and are likely to lead to a stronger self-confidence in making justified decisions on the practices they use in their performance. Hence research questions (2 and 3) deal with how teachers view practices and processes related to inclusion in their schools, and how they evaluate their own abilities to deliver. Published on KHDA website the school self-evaluation form includes the following main questions: How well are we doing? How do we know? Vision: how well should we be doing? Planning: what are we going to do now? Implementing our Action Plan; and are we doing what we have agreed?

These requirements presented the need to make drastic changes in the school culture and operations. In addition, underlying the four areas listed above is the need for collaboration and engagement with individuals and entities external to the school, which is another aspect of school weakness. Within a dearth of evidence regarding public awareness of inclusion principles as per DIEPF, it is questionable to what extent parents cooperated effectively with schools for the benefit of their children's development. Through its rapidly evolving inclusion policies within only 5 years, Dubai appears to aim to achieve what other countries have developed over at least three decades. The model of New Brunswick, Canada, has shown that the active engagement of parents and related organisations in the community is needed to collaborate and work together towards the same purpose (OECD, 2020). School Inspection Reports show that community outreach is not a strong aspect of schools in this study. It is therefore questionable whether such school adaptation has materialized, especially in view of the commonly high rate of teacher turnover which challenges the notion of capacity building of a school staff.

A number of educators in the USA and UK, typically from more than a decade ago, had advocated taking a 'measured approach' (Vaughn and Schumm,1995) and recommended the application of a continuum of placement options made available in schools for students with disabilities (Warnock and Norwich, 2005; Cigman, 2007; Farrell, 2010), based on the argument that inclusion of the most severe cases of

disabilities in mainstream schools is not working (Warnock, 2005, p.32); that many children with disabilities feel more comfortable with other students with similar disabilities rather than those of the same chronological age; and that inclusion was meant in the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994) for the majority of children with disabilities, but not necessarily for all (ibid). These views of applying a moderate inclusion; and the negative attitudes formed towards children with severe cases of disability certainly resonate with those of teachers in many schools in the UAE, (Gaad, 2004a), and appear to be used to justify the application of a separate SEN instruction in most schools in this study.

The research questions of this study were articulated such that they elicit information that can be used to help schools in prioritizing their objectives of their school improvement plans. As different countries understand and implement inclusive education differently (Ainscow and Miles,2009), the first research question was to find out what is the participants' understanding of inclusion. Next, the second question was meant to gather the participants' views on the way inclusion is enacted in their respective schools. The third question was regarding the participants' self-judgements of their abilities to cope in inclusion; and the fourth question was to explore what factors affect teachers' self-efficacy as a means to validate the elements identified in the Conceptual Framework. Finally, the fifth question guides the analysis of all the data gathered and synthesized about whether self-efficacy as a construct may be used to conceptualise issues that need to be addressed in inclusion.

2.3 Teacher Self-Efficacy and Inclusive Education (IE)

Self-Efficacy (SE) is a construct that has been given various definitions: initially, the research of RAND Corporation (1976) defined SE as follows:

> Teachers' perceptions of their influence on the motivation and learning of all students, including students who are unmotivated or display problem behavior (Guskey, 1988).

Albert Bandura (1997, p.vii), within the context of the Social Cognitive Theory, gave SE the following definition:

> ‘People's beliefs in their capabilities to produce desired effects by their own actions’.

According to Bandura (1993), the decision to carry out a course of actions is initiated in thought, which in turn, is mediated through various cognitive, affective, and selection processes: a teacher assesses the nature of the task involved, and the effort and persistence needed to face possible challenges. Belief in one’s abilities is a powerful drive which motivates one to act or behave in a certain manner; and when teachers view ability as an acquirable skill, and show readiness to meet a challenge, this also ‘fostered a highly resilient sense of personal efficacy’ (Bandura, 1997, p.308). However, such perception is not a linear relationship; and is context-specific, i.e., a teacher’s perception of SE may change for the same task but in a different environment, or with a different experience (ibid.).

Tschannen-Moran et al. (1998) added to the definition of SE the notion of a reciprocal relationship between personal factors and behaviour, which interact with the environment and influence one another: teacher SE is an individual’s calculation of a future task and its context, judged against the current level of functioning. The notion of reciprocity of influence among the three factors (personal factors, environment, and behaviour) has implications for teachers and schools: of the three factors, teachers have limited control over conditions of the environment, which are monitored by school leadership. Therefore, to influence the personal factors and behaviour of teachers, school leadership has a critical role to play on two fronts: empowering teachers with the right knowledge and skills in inclusion that would enhance teacher SE; and creating a positive school context that enables a collegiate ethos to prevail, which in turn, has an added positive effect on teacher SE. (Chapman et al., 2011; Fackler and Malmberg, 2016).

This reciprocal relationship also means that when self-efficacy is enhanced, teacher attitudes towards disability are likely to take a positive turn (Weisel et al., 2006; Urton et al., 2014), job satisfaction to be raised (Turkoglu et al., 2017); and that teachers’ emotions are widely impacted by their abilities to achieve their goals (Hargreaves, 2004). The opposite is also true: low teacher self-efficacy precedes

burn-out (Skaalvik and Skaalvik, 2007; Schwarzer and Hallum, 2008). However, caution was made that SE involves 'self-perception of competence' rather than 'actual level of competence' *(*Tschannen-Moran et al. (1998). In schools where there are limited opportunities for adequate teacher training and on-going teacher support to coach them in their practices, the expectation is that teachers' SE would be low, except in those instances where a teacher acquired SE through a 'mastery' experience (Bandura,1997). In this study, I investigate teachers' perceptions of their SE, regardless of what the outcomes of their actions were like, because among the main factors that matter for enhancing SE is the 'growth mindset' of a teacher, i.e., that abilities may be acquired through learning (Dweck et al., 2008).

The Social-Cognitive Theory provides a way for teacher capacity building: it posits that three main learning experiences that can enhance a teacher's self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997, p.80; Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998):

- '**Mastery learning experience'**, or teachers' own teaching practice, i.e., situations in which teachers' own performance has proven to be successful. This is the most powerful source of teacher learning because by actively doing, self-confidence is nurtured if outcomes are judged as successful (Guskey and Passaro, 1994, p.4; Tschannen-Moran et al.,1998).

> 'Enacted mastery (teaching) experiences are the most influential source of [self-] efficacy information because they provide the most authentic evidence of whether one can muster whatever it takes to succeed. Success builds a robust belief in one's personal efficacy'. (Bandura, 1997, p. 80).

- '**Vicarious experience'** is the learning that occurs by observing the performance modeled by a successful teacher, particularly if it is a trusted teacher, which generates a sense of learning from colleagues. By watching the effective performance of others, whether live or in the form of recorded video films, teachers learn how to be effective.

- '**Verbal persuasion'** includes coaching, or positive feedback on a teacher's performance, presumably reinforce self-efficacy, especially if from a trusted person viewed as more capable.

Also, the **physiological and emotional** states of a teacher can impact their self-evaluation both ways: excitement and enthusiasm generate a stronger self-efficacy, while stress and anxiety may impact a teacher's self-judgment negatively. From the social cognitive theory perspective, the self-assurance of individuals to perform influences their delivery, their choices, effort, emotions, and persistence when facing adverse conditions (Pajares, 1997).

Research findings indicate the many benefits of a high teacher SE: teachers show higher persistence at a task and readiness to take 'risks' trying and adopting innovative teaching practices, and to engage students in the lessons (Holzberger et al., 2014), and in their learning (Guo et al., 2011; Pas et al.,2012). Teachers with a high SE are more resilient towards students with low abilities; are less likely to experience burn-out (Henson, 2001; Ross & Bruce, 2007); and have greater enthusiasm and commitment to teaching (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001). Teacher SE was also found to correlate with better student learning outcomes in terms of achievement (Goddard et al.,2004), and more mastery in supporting students' learning (Malmberg et al.,2014), while a low teacher motivation was related with burnout (Skaalvik and Skaalvik, 2009). With students in mainstream classrooms becoming increasingly diverse in abilities, these findings illustrate the advantages of reinforcing teachers' SE to achieve improved inclusion provision.

2.3.1 Teacher Self-Efficacy and Attitude towards Inclusive Education

A positive attitude and behaviour of teachers are crucial elements for the success of inclusion (Urton et al., 2014), which is an approach to education that challenges not only teacher competences, but also any fears and negative thoughts and attitudes they may hold. Attitude is a construct that has been given different definitions (Eagly and Chaiken, 1993; Chaiklin, 2011), which was summed up as follows (Hogg and Vaughan, 2005, p.150): attitude is a construct with '…a relatively enduring organization of beliefs, feelings, and behavioral tendencies towards socially significant objects, groups, events or symbols'. It is a predisposition that may predict certain behaviour; hence the interest in education when a certain behaviour is favoured.

Although attitude can give some indication of what behaviour to expect, the link between attitude and behaviour is not linear (Bandura, 1993). For instance, research findings in Dubai and other countries indicate that teachers acknowledge the right to education as a basic human right for all, hence hold a 'conditional' attitude, but not necessarily one that is willing to engage in inclusion, because of the stress it invokes, (Sheikh, 2016), which is similar to findings elsewhere (Forlin and Joy, 2011; Savolainen et al.,2012). What drives an individual to take action is in greater likelihood, a belief in one's abilities (Bandura, 2006). Other research findings also confirmed that self-efficacy is the single most important factor affecting attitude (Weisel and Dror, 2006), which translates effectively into a teacher's mental readiness to make the effort to look for and implement the pertinent teaching strategies to use when interacting with students experiencing disabilities. Therefore, it makes sense that schools should focus efforts on enhancing teacher self-efficacy rather than on changing their attitudes: research provides evidence of the positive influence of sense of self-efficacy and personal experience regarding attitudes towards inclusion for children with disabilities (Urton et al., 2014). Hence when self-confidence in one's ability is high, attitude is highly likely to be positively affected, whereas the opposite may not be true.

However, research findings widely indicate that when teachers' attitudes towards disabilities are positive, the implementation of inclusive education is successful (Weisel and Dror, 2006; Urton et al., 2014), since it impacts the promotion of inclusion principles collectively among school staff (Goddard et al., 2004; Ainscow et al., 2013). As a result, learning outcomes of students with disabilities in mainstream classes are improved (Sharma et al.,2006). Successful outcomes in turn also feed the 'mastery experience' of a teacher and enhances a teacher's self- efficacy. Hence, attitude and self-efficacy seem to be two sides of the same coin, and though different in nature, both are positively impacted by capacity building of teaching staff.

2.4 Dual Legislation and Policy Enactment

2.4.1 Dual Legislation

Dubai is a geographic entity where two levels of legislation co-exist but are out of phase with each other, especially regarding the education of students with disabilities: at the over-arching federal level is the UAE Ministry of Education (MoE), which issued its latest policy on inclusion in 2010 (MoE, 2010), and applies the medical model of inclusion using a separate programme of special educational needs for all under-achieving students, with its practice of pull-out. At the Dubai emirate level, KHDA has adopted IE, and in 2017 issued the Dubai Inclusive Education Policy Framework (DIEPF), based on the two basic principles of access and equity in line with UNCRPD, and applies the social model of inclusion. Such different approaches to inclusion create tensions in the services provided by the different schools, as they produce different outcomes in each case, and implement school practices that affect teachers' self-efficacy in inclusive education. For instance, the two legislations also differ regarding staffing of inclusion specialists: federal regulations require to hire '*at least'* one Special Education teacher per school, who would even serve jointly more than one school (MoE, 2010, p.38), which is far less than the DIEPF required ratio of 1:200 students in a school (KHDA, 2017.p. 45).

Another issue resides within the widely diverse demographic composition of teachers in Dubai private schools. As countries of the world implement inclusion in different ways, many of which constitute mere placement of students with disabilities in a mainstream school, teachers from these countries are likely to be influenced by the culture of inclusion in their home countries. Therefore, a question that presents itself is not only how self-confident teachers feel in their abilities to cope, but also when teachers express their views on their self-efficacy in inclusion, to what model of inclusion do they refer?

2.4.2 Policy Enactment

Policy enactment comprises various stages, of which informing its practitioners on the ground of its content and objectives is an important step (Ball, 2012). Research findings are divided regarding the impact on teachers' earlier knowledge

about legislation and policy related to inclusion: in some studies, teachers' such previous knowledge, and their improved levels of confidence in becoming inclusive teachers, did not dissipate their concerns or perceived stress arising from the presence of students with disabilities in their classrooms (ibid.); while other studies reported higher levels of self-efficacy towards teaching within inclusive settings when combined with training in special education, and a teaching or personal experience with a disability (Sharma et al., 2014). Such findings suggest that the onsite experience of a teacher, when in an appropriately guided inclusive setting, empowers teachers by dissipating previous fears and stress that were due to ignorance. As such, these findings present a message to schools and policy-makers regarding the type of effective teacher training and professional development activities to undertake.

The OECD Education Working Paper No. 227 provides a comprehensive report on 'Mapping policy approaches and practices for the inclusion of students with special education needs' (OECD, 2020) and indicates at what stage are its member countries regarding each topic discussed. Some of the main findings on inclusion-related policies indicate the impact of education policies on student well-being which includes academic, social, psychological, physical and material outcomes, in addition to societal, equity and inclusion outcomes at the level of the labour market. Empirical studies have shown instances of inclusion working as a support for the overall well-being of students with and without disabilities; and that students with disabilities demonstrate positive academic outcomes in mainstream settings. However, the data and analyses available do not provide consistent and univocal conclusions and indicate the need for further research as there were differences in the study designs and mainstream settings that may have affected the results obtained (ibid.).

The empirical data from the experience of OECD country members indicates the many sets of variables that make up an effective mainstream setting, which depend on the characteristics and behaviour of all the individuals in a school community combined and can give unequivocal results in different environments. In

addition to careful planning and implementation of practices, the report also notes student well-being, implying the importance of teachers' empathetic approach; and the positive inclusion outcomes at the level of the labour market.

2.5 Models of Inclusion

This section aims to explain the different philosophical approaches to inclusion which differ basically in the ways in which disability is understood with respect to the environment they live in, the policy targets and the necessary services and means to respond to the individual's needs arising from the disability (OECD, 2020). As a result, the different paradigms translate into alternative views of education for children with special educational needs and disabilities (Hornby, 2015). Three different models have evolved over time, each with its different series of actions and practices, which have an impact on staff relationships and teacher self-efficacy in inclusion.

a) The medical model (MM)**:** The medical model was the first model applied and understands disability as defined by the World Health Organisation (WHO, 2011, p.4):

> 'Disability is the umbrella term for impairments, activity limitations and participation restrictions, referring to the negative aspects of the interaction between an individual with a health condition and that individual's contextual factors (environmental and personal factors)'.

Under this model, disability includes only impairments, which are problems in a body function or alteration in the body structure. Accordingly, such a disability is addressed within its narrow sense by promoting physical or geographical 'access' to a school; and where the focus is on surrounding factors, such as providing a ramp in the school building for physically impaired students.

In terms of the education of an individual with such an impairment, disability according to this model is interpreted as a lack of capacity to perform at the same level as persons with no disability and presumes a reduced capacity to learn and achieve. Hence according to UAE federal regulations (MoE, 2010), a specific Individual Educational Programme (IEP) is decided and produced for each student by the Evaluation Team Members in a school and is implemented by the subject or

class teacher in the ‘least restrictive environment’. However, the regulation leaves it up to a school committee to decide on issues of adapting the learning content and teaching strategies to use. The general objective is about placement with peers in a mainstream classroom or through pull-out sessions in a ‘resource room’ to receive individual or small group instruction for a portion of the schooling time (MoE, 2010, p.30). However, many educators advocate that instead of applying a separate pedagogy for special education, the more important agenda is about how to develop a pedagogy that is inclusive of all learners (Davis and Florian, 2004). This model is no longer approved in Dubai since such provision is viewed as discriminating and defeating the purpose of inclusion at the social, developmental and educational levels, and is not aligned with the principles of the UNCRPD which the UAE ratified.

b) The social model (a rights-based model) (SM): The social model of inclusion defines ‘disability’ as an adverse condition, the product of schooling practices, or due to restrictions imposed by the environment, or as a result of negative attitudes, beliefs and practices of society, rather than the problem being with the student (Sharma et al., 2011). Hence the disability is not an attribute of the individual but is rather the result of the way society is organised, which disadvantages and excludes people with impairments (Armstrong et al., 2011) and through such interaction with the environment, forms a barrier to learning. As a state inflicted upon the individual by an environmental factor (KHDA, 2017), a ‘common learning environment’ is prescribed (KHDA, 2019a, p.10) for the student to be alongside his peers, and barriers need to be eliminated so the individual can achieve the full potential of his/her abilities.

Such a philosophical approach is advocated by many as necessary to achieve full inclusion, but it creates increased demands on adequate teacher training, availability of continued teacher support and guidance, and hiring inclusion specialists to overcome the lack of expertise within the system. Also, a classroom with students of diverse abilities poses a challenge for teachers in terms of class management and differentiated instruction to meet the needs of each student (Hurt, 2012).

Some studies were conducted to compare the outcomes of some practices of the medical and the social models to find out where a student with disabilities achieves better academic and social outcomes. A study in Texas investigating teachers' perspectives on the efficacy of pull-out compared to inclusive programmes, since the academic and social effectiveness of each practice was a widely debated issue. The results provided mixed results (Fernandez and Hynes, 2016). Another study showed that results depend on the individual student's needs, and on the instruction methods used (Barton, 2016). An additional study that compares teachers' opinions on push-in, (i.e., where student support is provided while in the classroom with peers) and pull-out in Italy and Norway showed the majority favoured a more differentiated and student-centred environment, as the learning and social needs are both met for all learners in the class, regardless of disabilities or learning challenges (Demo et al., 2021).

Such findings are an indication for schools to note that among other aspects such as the location and environment where learning takes place, crucial factors are the following for IE to be effective: adequate teacher training; differentiated instruction centred around the student's needs; and a close collaboration between subject teachers and support staff so their roles effectively complement each other in catering to the students' learning needs. In Dubai, the social model underlies the principles of IE, adopted as they are viewed as leading to excellence in education. It is important to note that in countries with a longer experience in inclusion where IE principles are endorsed, underlying such regulations is a conceptual framework that combines key principles of effective professional development for its practitioners (Brennan, King and Travers, 2019) to address gaps in teachers' knowledge.

Another issue resides within the widely diverse demographic composition of teachers in Dubai private schools. As countries of the world implement inclusion in different ways, many of which constitute mere placement of students with disabilities in a mainstream school, teachers from these countries are likely to be influenced by the culture of inclusion in their home countries. Therefore, a question that presents itself is not only how self-confident teachers feel in their abilities to

cope, but also when teachers express their views on their self-efficacy in inclusion, to what model of inclusion do they refer?

c) Biopsychosocial model: Proposed in late 1970s to give a broader understanding of disability and impairment compared to the medical model, which was then viewed as the health condition which requires medical treatment. The model considers both social and medical interventions as appropriate to address disability. The approach recommends that an education system should analyse the environment of a student with a disability or impairment and make accommodations based on the individual student's needs. Disability and functioning are conceptualized as a multidimensional interaction between health conditions, environmental factors and personal factors. (OECD, 2020.p.10). This approach is not based on the assumption of a limited capacity to learn and requires the co-ordinated efforts of specialists in medical and inclusion issues, which is generally not the case in the schools visited in this study.

The note should be made that since schools in this study were found to apply any of two different philosophical approaches: the medical model and the social model, elaborated on further in section (2.4). At the outset of any interview, once it became clear to me that participants in a school are generally unaware of IE principles, the dialogue reverted to using the terms of the medical model. Hence throughout the text of this study, terms are used only as a verbal reflection of whichever concept represents the participants' understanding of the practices their schools required them to apply but is by no means meant to be an interchangeable use of the two terms. Therefore, in this thesis, I use the expression 'students with disabilities' to indicate any student in need of support services in any school type. The terms 'inclusion' and 'special educational needs' (SEN) are used in schools that were found to apply the medical model: in these schools, SEN is used to describe the kind of educational programme offered, or the receiving student in need of support. While IE and 'students with special educational needs and disabilities' (SEND) relate to terms of the constructs used in schools that apply the social model of inclusion, even if partially.

2.6 Teacher Self-Efficacy and School Leadership

The data generated through this study on school leadership are those seen through the lens of a teacher describing the style of their respective school leaderships and how inclusive education is implemented in their schools.

Self-efficacy is a complex construct that not only involves cognitive and personal factors that are recognized as usually guiding an individual's behaviour, but appears to be in constant interaction with factors of the specific contexts in which individuals are acting. Bandura postulated this interaction through a model of triadic reciprocal determinism where an individual's behaviour is an outcome of interaction with environmental events and cognitive and personal factors, which work their mutual effects sequentially over variable time courses as reciprocal determinants of each other (Bandura, 1983). What this means for a school is that among these three interacting poles in the triadic model, the easiest pole to influence is the school environment such that it can potentially achieve the ultimate objective of raising teacher self-efficacy in their abilities to cope with inclusive education. When teachers' needs are met in terms of guidance and support, they are then more likely to undertake facing the challenge of the task; and once mastered, self-efficacy is enhanced further, and teachers are more likely to venture than to avoid future difficult tasks(ibid.).

School principals play a crucial role in preparing schools to address the needs of students with disabilities (Ainscow and Sandill, 2010). School leaders are in a position where they can enhance co-operation and the sharing of skills and practices among teachers (OECD, 2018). Providing opportunities for teachers to discuss, plan, and cooperate in their efforts benefits all students and teachers in a school: at the student level, discussion is a communication channel that can serve to ensure consistency of provision across students' learning and interactions with all adults in a school. Research findings indicate that principals who support and collaborate with their teaching staff play a key role in building a school culture that promotes effective inclusion, which indirectly impacts student performance (Ainscow et al., 2013).

In addition, regular and professional discussions of teaching staff and SEN specialists to evaluate the progress of students with disabilities, present a platform for teachers' vicarious learning in a school (Bandura, 1997). When leadership flexibility allows such discussions, teachers show a stronger tendency to commit to implementing changes recommended by the participants than those mandated top-down, due to the sense that these changes have been self-initiated and fulfilling teachers' own purposes of success, while also granting them recognition from their colleagues (Hargreaves, 2004.) Based on the Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1997), learning that empowers teachers in overcoming classroom challenges is commonly known to strengthen their self-efficacy, and as this may be acquired through learning from the experience of their peers, in turn contributes to a sense of collective efficacy (Bandura, 1993, 1997; Ninkovic and Floric, 2016). Hence school leadership plays a crucial role in enhancing teachers' sense of self-efficacy as well as collective efficacy (Urton et al., 2014). Therefore, for successfully implementing the principles of IE in a school, leadership needs to fully understand and embrace the important factors that impact teacher attitudes towards inclusion (Weisel and Dror, 2006) through ensuring the right support, guidance, and capacity building measures (Day and Sammons, 2013). Analysis of data from OECD's Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) of 2008 on viewing leadership through the lens of teachers has indicated that the principal's work experience and the leadership style were significant predictors of teacher self-efficacy (Fackler and Malmberg, 2016)

Since effective inclusion requires to have all teachers of the same student with disability collaborate together for consistency in the instructional interaction offered (Harris, 2003; Savolainen et al. 2012), this calls for a collegiate ethos with collaboration to be prevalent in the school. To achieve such an ethos, the type of leadership that can more successfully make the shift to effective inclusion is one that can 'de-centre' (Gronn,2000), and one that recognizes that leading is not the role of only one or a few individuals, but is distributed to persons at every level who can lead a team in a specific activity (Goleman,2002). However, such an approach to leadership is based on the premise that teaching staff are already qualified in

pedagogy, enact IE principles, and possess the professional capacity to lead teaching activities. Therefore, a school restructure and training of senior and middle level leadership is an equal need to that of training teachers in inclusive education practices towards a strong SE. The kind of leadership that can lead an inclusive school are supportive (Weisel and Dror, 2006) and educative leaders, who recognise that school growth hinges on the capacity of colleagues to develop (Ainscow, 2001; Chapman et al., 2011) because they take 'transformational' approaches, which are intended to distribute and empower, rather than 'transactional' approaches, which sustain traditional concepts of hierarchy and control(Ainscow, 2001, p.6); and have a strong positive influence on the attitudes of teaching staff and their experience of collective efficacy (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Forlin et al., 2011; Urton et al., 2014).

2.7 Collective Teacher Efficacy and Staff Relationships in Inclusive Education

The term 'Collective Teacher Efficacy' (CTE) is defined as 'a group's shared belief in the conjoint capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given levels of attainment' (Bandura, 1993,1997). CTE is an important characteristic of successful schools at several levels: it promotes student achievement (Goddard et al., 2007); helps teachers in dealing with stress (Johnson, 2003); and enhances a school's capacity to improve (Li et al., 2016). Teachers' trust in their ability to succeed as a group (Truijen et al., 2013) motivates them in making more effective use of the teaching skills they possess, thus enriching the social capital of the school.

The research literature presents many findings in countries with a longer experience in inclusion on ways to strengthen teacher self-efficacy. Below are some of these findings which have been used to guide the articulation of the research questions of this study, as well as the survey and interview semi-guided questions, with the aim of gathering data on the related school practices the participants in this study were experiencing.

According to the Social Cognitive Theory, exposure to the skills of others appears to work as a 'vicarious experience', and a sense of 'collective efficacy' can emerge (Bandura, 1997). However, to attain a collective aim of the group requires not only the total sum of the shared knowledge and skills of its members, but also the interactive collaboration and synergistic dynamics of their transactions (Bandura, 2000). Therefore, questions presented to the participants in this study investigated the extent to which they learn from one another through an on-going professional dialogue which in itself, presents a valuable resource for learning new teaching practices from peers (Skaalvik and Skaalvik, 2007); and likewise, hold discussions relating to the progress of students with disabilities in their individualized educational plans (IEP) so that consistency of the teaching quality can prevail (Bandura,1997); and to what extent do the collaborating teachers feel empowered through the concerted planning and practice.

Goddard et al. (2004) suggest that as a result, the perceived collective teacher efficacy (CTE) affects individual teacher self-efficacy by serving as a normative expectation for goal attainment and empowers teachers to overcome teaching challenges they faced when on their own. This presumably brings about a positive change in teacher attitudes towards inclusion shared by all staff, which is a basic requirement in inclusion (Avramidis and Norwich, 2002) because of its positive effect on student outcomes (Hattie, 2015); and contributes to a general view that disability is an opportunity rather than a challenge (ibid.; Ainscow et al., 2013). However, collaboration is a term that requires clarity in defining the roles and responsibilities of each member of the teaching staff, to avoid challenges such as those identified in a study in Ireland of teachers collaborating practices in the process of implementing an individualized education programme (IEP). The study shows collaboration is not an easy process as it may arouse issues relating to constructs of joint instructional work, communication, values and ethics (Bhroin and King, 2019).

2.8 School Inspections and Inclusive Education

School inspections have historically served different purposes in different countries: at first, it was a quality check of public schools, on which depended the allocation of government funds (Thomas, 1998). Further on, the focus moved to student achievement (Hanushek and Raymond, 2004). Lately in Europe it has been used to improve the quality of compulsory education (Eurydice, 2004), based on the view that with effective monitoring and evaluation of schools, the outcome can be continuous student improvement (OECD, 2014).

In the UAE and other countries of the Gulf, governments rely on private school inspection as a means of quality check to encourage school reform (El Saadi, 2017). No public funds are allocated to the private sector in UAE, but private schools are accountable to parents for quality of provision (Selim, 2016), and to Dubai government policies for compliance. The online publication of the annual School Inspection Reports and their ratings raises the level of competition among schools, with the purpose of encouraging the drive towards improvement.

The specific strategy of Dubai for improving school provision has been to use internationally accepted standards of teaching and learning in addition to those in SIF to guide schools in their implementation of inclusion. In addition, several documents were published to guide the schools towards improvement. The model of educational quality control applied in the UAE is that the government licenses, inspects, and rates the provision of private schools and publishes the school reports, intended to encourage schools to improve their provision. No funds are allocated to private schools, but as an incentive, KHDA provides the option of approving an incremental rise in a school's tuition fees subject to attaining a higher overall rate as per the School Fees Framework (KHDA, 2017b). In a highly competitive school market, one can assume that schools would all seek to improve their rating to make a better financial profit. As the ratings of the schools selected in this study were at a standstill for at least five years in a row, this suggested that something was amiss in these schools, and I set out in this study to find out what it is.

School inspection visits are potentially valuable learning experiences for teachers, and they start with the requirement to have the school fill out a self-evaluation report. Self-evaluation presents an exercise in internal quality assurance, and if compared with the judgements of the School Inspection teams obtained after the school inspection visit, can potentially provide detailed guidance on what school improvement is expected to look like, by making school staff aware of how their performance is being judged. However, school self-evaluation was judged by the School Inspection teams as one of the weaknesses of many schools such as those in this study. The KHDA recommended cycle of plan-act-evaluate to achieve school improvement is also an essential procedure in the weekly review of progress for a student with disabilities, hence the expectation that teachers would be under-performing in this process in IE.

School Inspection Reports present an official record of the quality of schooling, with quality judgements that have research value (Selim, 2016) and are used by the government for decision-making and issuing policies relating to private schools in Dubai, as they are the main source of information on educational provision. Local research findings indicate that a positive and moderately strong association exists between school quality assurance and the UAE Inspection framework as a quality assurance metric (El Saadi, 2017); and that school inspection has a significant role in school improvement, especially in teaching and learning (Alkutich and Abukari, 2018). In the absence of any other source of information, the school ratings and the operation of the school inspection teams are fairly reliable judgements of school performance and the ratings were used as criteria for the selection of schools in this study.

However, school inspection is not a perfect system: other subjects such as the Arts, Sports, Geography and History are overlooked, although they are known to contribute to the personal and cultural development of youth. Especially for students experiencing disability, research is increasingly recommending to provide greater attention to teaching music (Darrow and Adamek, 2018); and Arts to students with disabilities (Malley & Silverstein, 2014), since it enables children to develop multiple

forms of expression and of communication (Gardner,1999; Anderson, 2014), in addition to an increased sense of self-worth and self-esteem and positive behavioural adjustments (De Chiara,1990).Therefore to give a rating for school performance in Inclusion in the absence of a judgement on the Arts and Sports is an incomplete evaluation. In addition, the same standards are used to judge provision in all schools, but does not 'measure what we value' (Ainscow and Miles, 2009), with no regard to teacher efforts to overcome the size of impediments to improvement that teachers face in schools judged as low-performing.

Private school inspections in Dubai operate as a quality control tool that uses a validation model, i.e., makes judgements and rates school-curriculum provision against the curriculum of the home country, and standards in the School Inspection Framework, based on internationally recognized standards of a quality education provision. The inspection rating is subsequently a judgement that combines yet another set of data at international standards, namely, student results in the international assessments TIMSS and PISA (KHDA, ACTVET, ADEC and MoE, 2015). The school rating is therefore the product of evaluation of school performance against two independent sets of data measured against standards commonly recognized as reliable. As such, it made sense to use school ratings as a criterion for the selection of schools for this study, an aspect that is further discussed in Chapter 4 on Findings.

2.9 Parents and Inclusive Education

The involvement of parents in their children's education has widely been reported in research in the USA and Europe as benefiting the children's learning and outcomes (Zellman & Waterman,1998) though 'involvement' meant many different types of parenting to different researchers. Parental engagement in helping their children succeed in school is positively related to children's grades and achievement (Hoover -Dempsey and Sandler, 1998); and in terms of the disabled child's social skills, families with highly cohesive and democratic family styles provide a safe foundation for children's development (Bennett and Hay, 2007).

The federal UAE regulation (MoE, 2010) details the rights and responsibilities of both the school and the parents of students with disabilities and encourages a relationship of cooperation and continuous communication between both parties. Likewise for the Dubai policy DIEPF (KHDA, 2017a; KHDA 2019b), and in addition KHDA requires schools to encourage parents to actively participate in assessment and planning, and to ensure that parents have a voice in policy, strategic planning, decision-making and evaluation. (KHDA, 2019b). The effective engagement of parents is a critical factor so that the identification of a disability does not result in unnecessarily low educational expectations, and parents are encouraged to comment and to highlight specific objectives they wish to achieve through the IEP (ibid.). Schools are also encouraged to assist parents by connecting them with professionals specialized in SEN with whom to consult in cases of need.

The rising tendency to enrol children with disabilities in Dubai private schools is a likely indication of increasing parent awareness regarding inclusion services in schools. This is a big step forward where social stigma was common until recently in the UAE and in other countries of the region (Crabtree, 2007; Gaad, 2011). Yet many parents initially show denial of their child's disability for fear of their social stigmatization and the 'labeling' (Gaad, 2011) due to the special item in the student's end-of-year certificate that indicates the kind of special services s/he received (MoE, 2010).

The literature shows an increasing emphasis on schools to promote parent engagement and partnerships with community-level services for the benefit of students with disabilities (OECD, 2020). Parents of students with disabilities are essential resources in sharing information and collaborating with teachers: hence enhancing communication channels, home learning activities, and child-raising skills can improve the child's academic performance, school participation and behaviour, in addition to enhancing the child's socio-emotional well-being (Barlow and Humphrey, 2010). However, as enhanced parental engagement may have potential shortcomings, such approaches need to be effectively designed and implemented.

2.10 Summary

This chapter attempted to present the existing knowledge from the research literature on self-efficacy and theories on how it can determine the course of actions an individual undertakes when faced with a challenging task. This chapter also presented research findings on teacher self-efficacy in inclusion, and the factors that impact teacher behaviour in inclusion. Reference is also made to the experience of countries in their attempts to implement inclusion practices in accordance with the evolving international policies since the Salamanca Statement of UNESCO in 1994.

This chapter also related to the development of legislations effective in the UAE in the country's journey to align with the international policies; and reviews the different models of inclusion. Policy knowledge understanding and enactment is an important part of the conceptual framework (Chapter 1, section 1.9). It is highlighted in the conceptual framework due to its importance as a point of reference in guiding practitioners on the ground in the activities they undertake, and how it can affect outcomes. However, other factors of the environment are outside the scope of this study, and therefore leave a gap in the conceptual framework: it is the absence of factors that can potentially be very helpful in a school's journey towards effective inclusion, such as specialist organisations in the community, or a more active role of the national media in embedding a greater awareness of the rights of individuals with disabilities. However, this study is specifically focused on teacher efficacy which, if inclusive education is to be effective, involves understanding the relative capabilities of individual teachers and schools in enacting the most up to date of Dubai's policies.

The research literature abounds with studies of various aspects in inclusion, with data gathered mostly from the perspective of a student, and aim to investigate student learning outcomes, or programmes for pre-service teacher students, with teachers situated at the receiving end of policy regulations and internal school instructions. As indicated by the conceptual framework, presented in Chapter 1 (Chapter 1, section 1.9), the value of this study is its contribution to fill the existing

gap in knowledge on teacher self-efficacy as seen from a teacher's perspective in schools with limited resources; and in the wider gap regarding the implementation of inclusion in countries of the MENA region concerning inclusion.

This study contributes knowledge to fill this gap: it examines the relationship between the factors identified in the Conceptual Framework in Chapter 1 section 1.9, and teacher self-efficacy in inclusion as implemented within the contexts of schools viewed by the government as low performers. The significance of this study lies in giving voice to teachers' views and beliefs in how inclusion is implemented in their schools, which is a generally under-researched aspect, despite the reality that teachers are the agents that enact education policies on the ground. Teachers' views and beliefs are acknowledged as crucial for an effective inclusion (Avramidis, 2002), and thus may serve as entry points that need to be addressed in order to achieve the government objectives of bringing about the desired reform of the education system.

Chapter 3 lays out the methodology and research methods used; and Chapter 4 presents the Findings of this study.

3 CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

In this study, my philosophical stance is interpretivism, the research paradigm that considers truth and knowledge to be subjective, the researcher is viewed as being part of the research, hence the data interpreted can never be objective or removed from the research (Ryan, 2018). Inductive reasoning is generally used in gathering the data, and in looking for patterns or differences. Likewise in the reasoning applied to interpret the data to give meaning to, explain or understand the results of the research (ibid.), or in triangulating with other secondary data from a fairly reliable source such as KHDA publications and international policies. However, deductive reasoning may also occasionally be used to refer to previous theories or bodies of knowledge from the research literature (Bryman, 2008), or in triangulating results with reliable resources of secondary data.

However, as the researcher is 'part of the world we study and the data we collect' (Charmaz 2006, p.10), the results would take a subjectivist description since reality is coloured by the researcher's own perceptions and experiences (Rapley, 2018). Aware that Interpretivist research is judged by 'trustworthiness, credibility, transferability and confirmability' (Denzin and Lincoln 2005, p.24), rigour was applied in measures taken to ensure the first two of these criteria apply, as elaborated on in sections (3.6 and 3.7); however, transferability and applicability to other private schools in Dubai may not be the case due to the diverse contextual factors of each school, but rather similar trends may be more realistic.

3.1.1 The Conceptual Focus and the research objective

The conceptual framework in Chapter 1 section 1.9.1 mapped out the variables that affect teacher self-efficacy, as findings of previous studies have shown, and based on the theories underlying the framework. The research objective of this study is to gain insights on how to tip the balance towards strengthening a teacher's self-efficacy in inclusion, given that these variables not only relate to the teacher in a dynamic and reciprocal interaction, but are also inter-related and influence one another, whether directly or indirectly. However, missing are the non-tangible

variables of the school ethos, or school climate, which decides the nature and context of relationships among individuals within and external to their school, and affect teachers' attitudes (Weisel and Dror, 2006; Chapman et al., 2011). These variables, together with the tangible factors in the Conceptual Framework, influence the teachers' cognitive and affective domains throughout the sifting process of making a decision concerning what behaviour to undertake.

The conceptual framework also shows how two resources external to the school can impact teacher self-efficacy: on the one hand, school culture and attitudes; leadership, and staff roles and relationships are items derived from the Index for Inclusion. Probing into this area would also inform whether teachers have a sense of collective efficacy in their schools. On the other hand, some of the criteria for inspection in the School Inspection Framework, outlined in Chapter 1, section 1.4, are also covered by the Conceptual Framework: these include school leadership; effectiveness of school processes towards achieving some National Agenda parameters; whether DIEPF is enacted as a policy to implement IE; and student learning outcomes. Therefore, as these criteria are judged by the School Inspection teams based on standards recognised as ensuring quality education provision, the data obtained in this study would be given further rigour by triangulating against the inspection judgements in the School Inspection Reports as a reliable source of secondary data of the schools in this study, available online on KHDA website (www.khda.gov.ae).

With the many factors at play, the conceptual framework serves to create the research design and for selecting the appropriate research methods: the implication being that the use of a variety of qualitative research methods, each with its own advantages, discussed further in section (3.3) below, yields empirical in-depth data with a higher validity (Miles et al., 2014). The research objective is to gain insights on the nature of these relationships that govern the complex array of factors in the framework, and as such, indicate the pertinent research methodology to use. A social paradigm with an inductive approach is used to gain insights on teacher self-efficacy,

through qualitative research methods that respond to questions of 'how' and 'what' and 'why' (Kipling, 2004, in Trafford and Leshem, 2008, p.90).

The aim of the inquiry is to understand the beliefs and views of 50 teaching staff from seven private schools in Dubai on the specific contexts of their schools, which share the common characteristic of low overall school performance and in inclusion provision. Questioning how participants in these low-performing schools make sense of the complexities of what they are supposed to do, of their context, and what helps or hinders their self-efficacy generates an understanding of their experiences from their perspectives (Creswell, et al. 2006) and provides answers to the research questions of the study. In addition, aspects of their school contexts that appear to have a negative impact on teacher self-efficacy in inclusion are highlighted to which the study aspires to contribute ways of improving, so they can be addressed to ensure better student outcomes. To clarify what the school contexts were like with regard to IE, I drew on some variables from the Index for Inclusion (Booth and Ainscow, 2002) to include in the survey questionnaire, that can elucidate a description of inter-staff relationships and processes.

3.2 The Research Methodology

The conceptual framework of this study maps out the various factors that impact teachers' self-judgement of their abilities, and illustrates their relationship to each other (Punch, 2000) based on knowledge acquired from the literature. The conceptual framework presents the foundation on which the research questions are based, and guides the researcher in choosing the right methodology as follows (Robson,1993, in Leshem and Trafford, 2007, p.97).

> '…to be selective; to decide which are the important features; which relationships are likely to be of importance or meaning; and hence, what data you are going to collect and analyse.'

However, this study seeks to bridge the gap in knowledge concerning teachers' self-confidence in their abilities to cope in school contexts that do not foster an effective inclusion, as seen from the teachers' perspective.

For an inquiry that investigates a phenomenon within its real-life context and serves to understand the differences and similarities in teachers' perceptions, the

methodology chosen was a context-situated multi-case study (Yin, 2003; Stake, 2006) since it focuses on groups of teachers from three different types of school curricula, where each school type is a 'bounded system' (Stake,1995; Yin, 2003; Merriam, 2009). As various procedures of data collection can be used in case studies (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2009, 2012), and compiled for triangulation (Stake, 1995; Denzin, 2015), a mixed-methods approach was selected, with the benefit of triangulation being that it provides 'better inferences based on a greater diversity of divergent views' (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2003: 14–15).

To achieve gathering in-depth data on the views and beliefs of practitioners in a situation characterized by the authority as commonly failing presents a challenge in selecting the right methodology. The expectation was that school staff would be apprehensive to impart information on a sensitive issue; and the limited time slot for a school visit was one day, as indicated by KHDA, was approved to be conducted no later than the month of May, following which schools would be too busy to admit visitors doing research. Therefore, a mixed-methods approach was selected using mostly qualitative research methods, i.e., interviews, focus group meetings, and a survey; while the survey responses provided the quantified bit. Inductive reasoning is generally followed to build a new body of knowledge that bridges the gap on addressing teacher self-efficacy as a starting-point that leads to effective inclusion; and deductive reasoning is used wherever necessary to link to other studies in the literature.

The rationale behind selecting the above qualitative research methods for this study is that each method has its strengths and weaknesses elaborated on further in the sections below, but the strength of each compensates for the weakness of the other (Cresswell,2014). The accumulated data on each topic covered through these three tools enables making links between the various variables with greater confidence of reliability. To capture such in-depth information would need more than one research method while taking into account the contexts of the schools, which are described briefly in Appendix 1.

The ‘Index for Inclusion’ (Booth and Ainscow, 2002) is used to guide schools worldwide in their journey for implementing inclusion by adopting a self-evaluation approach to their activities and for building supportive communities (Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education, CSIE, 2011). Aligned with the Dubai Initiative for making the emirate ‘fully inclusive’ by 2020, and with the standards of DIEPF (KHDA, 2017a) a few questions in the survey questionnaire are based on some of indicators of this Index. These are: the integration of forms of support in the school; planning teaching; how barriers to learning are removed; staff collaboration; professional development activities; and communication between school and parents.

It is worthwhile noting that the participants in this study were selected by the school management in accordance with regulations, i.e., the least disruption possible made to their class schedules. I had no way of knowing whether they were purposively selected or otherwise. Also, as only 50 participants were involved in this study, no claim is made to generalise its findings.

Following this introductory section which justifies the selection of the methodology for this study as the best fit to gather data that would provide answers to the research questions of the study, the rest of the sections in this chapter are as follows: (3.2) Research Methodology; (3.3) Research Design;(3.4) Research Methods; and (3.5) Ethical Issues.

3.2.1 **Case Study**

A review of the literature reveals there are several definitions for ‘case study’. Case study is used as per the definition by Merriam (2009, p.40) which views the case as

> ‘An in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system;’ as ‘…a thing, a single entity, a unit around which there are boundaries’

with its attributes of ‘an integrated system’ which ‘has a boundary and working parts’ (Stake, 1995, p.2). While a qualitative case study is a description and analysis of ‘…a bounded phenomenon such as a program, an institution, a person, a process, or a social unit’ (Merriam,1998, p. xiii). The definition of Creswell (2002, p. 61) provides further clarity:

> ‘A case study is a problem to be studied, which will reveal an in-depth understanding of a “case” or bounded system, which involves understanding an event, activity, process, or one or more individuals’.

This last definition summarises what this inquiry is about: the problem to be studied is teacher self-efficacy in inclusion, and how they are affected by factors in the school environment of the three school types in this study, which together constitute a multi-case study.

Case study is ‘intensive’, provides more depth, i.e., more detail, richness, and variance (Flyvbjerg, 2011), and has been recommended where the focus is on individuals or groups of actors, and seeks to understand their perceptions of events (Hitchcock and Hughes,1995; in Cohen et al., 2007), as it points out the inter-relationship between teacher perceptions and factors in their school contexts (Yin, 2002). Case study relies on an interpretation of the individual stance to understand and reach new meanings through the rich data gathered, as well as through aggregation of instances until something can be said about them as a class (Flyvbjerg, 2006). Since various procedures of data collection can be used in case studies (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2009, 2012), and compiled for triangulation (Stake, 1995; Denzin, 2015), a mixed-methods approach was selected to triangulate the data received in the qualitative and quantitative methods used to capture in-depth data on people’s views, beliefs and self-judgement of their abilities.

The schools in this study are classified into three groups or ‘cases’ by the type of curriculum offered, hence this is a multi-case study (Yin, 2003; Stake, 2006), which forms the boundary of a school- group and constitutes the first level of boundaries. Schools within the same curriculum- type would roughly share general characteristics of the school culture; the organizational structure and governance; the niche communities served; and the demographic composition of school staff and students. Assuming that each group of schools would create a ‘class’ is not used for generalization, and accordingly, the seven schools in this study cannot present a statistically reliable basis for generalization. It should also be remembered that the content of the curriculum is irrelevant, while what matters is the combination of the other school variables mentioned that characterize the school type.

However, at the data analysis stage it became clear that an emergent grouping based on the form of leadership turned out to be more significant than that of the curriculum because of its impact on teachers. Seen through the lens of a teacher's perspective, the descriptions of leadership actions and procedures build higher level cases in an iterative process. Case study is the best fit for an instance where the boundary influences its 'working parts', or the teachers. At the second level of boundaries are a school's 'working parts', or the individual teachers, with their personal traits and thoughts on inclusion, which are a product of their personal experience in their specific environments (Bandura, 1997). Therefore, in the data analysis, while issues will be pointed out relating to the specific leadership type in a school, for convenience the analysis will continue to identify schools by their type of curriculum to enable triangulation with corresponding data from the School Inspection Reports of KHDA. Hence, the study has two levels of boundaries, which can be defined by the characteristics of each group of participants (Cohen et al., 2007): one is the specific context of type of school governance (which is not necessarily linked to the school curriculum). The second level involves the individual teacher's thoughts on inclusion, which are a product of their personal experience in their specific environments.

Although case study is generally a poor basis for generalization, yet it is a 'detailed examination of a single example…but may provide reliable information about the broader class' ibid.). From these demographically diverse participants working within various contexts of schools, any similarities of findings could represent a 'class' of a kind, and teachers' views need to be interpreted to understand the problem and learn from their experience, and to answer the research questions of this study. How the various environmental factors of a school affect teacher perception of their self-efficacy is a key research interest in this study and will be looked into in the analysis of results.

In mixed-methods research, the sequence in which surveys and interviews are used matters, with the survey often preceding the interviews so that any unexpected responses from the survey would constitute material to be further clarified through

interviews (Creswell and Guetterman, 2019). In this study, the survey is administered to participants immediately following their being interviewed for the following reasons: the topic of the inquiry is likely to be viewed with apprehension, as it questions teachers' confidence in their abilities to achieve tasks for which they had not been adequately trained and were rated as weak, thus pushing them to give inflated responses in self-defense of their abilities. Hence, a survey provides the respondents with more privacy to respond presumably more frankly and discreetly than in face-to-face interviews or in focus groups. In addition, being with the participants while they were responding to the survey meant that in case any clarification was needed regarding the terminology used, I would be able to step in and avoid responses being given due to misconceptions in the language used.

It is worthwhile noting that participants in this study were made available by the school management in accordance with the principle of the least disruption possible made to their class schedules. I had no way of knowing whether they were purposively selected or otherwise; and their total number of 50 participants is statistically not reliable for generalization.

3.2.2 **Mixed methods approach**

A mixed-methods approach has been selected as preferable to using only one type of research method (qualitative or quantitative) because it provides new insights that may not be captured when using only one of the two methods; and because the rationale is that either used alone is not sufficient to answer the research problem (Ivankova et al., 2006; Plano Clark & Creswell, 2008; Creswell and Guetterman, 2019) and can bring a wider range of evidence to better understand a phenomenon and to represent more fully the complexity of behaviour in natural social contexts(Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2010), and a more comprehensive description of the subject at hand can be drawn through a triangulation of the findings. (Denscombe, 2008). This is an example of how collated data from different research methods present the value of complementing each other in the information gathered and thus provide 'a very powerful mix' of data (Miles et al. 2014., p.44) for a more complete

understanding of the issue at hand, and with the results of one method validating those of the other.

3.3 Research Methods

3.3.1 Introduction

According to Denzin and Lincoln (2005, p.3), qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world, i.e., things are studied in their natural settings, in order to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. Questions regarding the 'why' and 'how' of human experience call for the use of qualitative research, and methods such as semi-structured interviews, focus groups and a survey with closed-ended questions enable such probing to gather the required data(ibid.); and by quantifying the survey responses, a numerical sense of trends in teachers' views is revealed. These research methods provide insight from the participants' perspectives on social situations and peoples' behaviour, and on the multiple realities of their life experience (McMillan and Schumacher, 2001, p.15), and produce data that answer the research questions.

Each research method has its advantages and weaknesses, and data from more than one method help to compensate for the weakness of each form (Creswell, 2014, p.43). A greater weight is given to the qualitative data from the semi-structured interviews of individuals and focus groups, and from the survey; while the survey covers the same topics as those in the interview, but also quantifies, complements and validates the data from the interviews and focus groups for a more complete understanding of the problem (Creswell and Guetterman, 2019). Moreover, focus group meetings were a time-saving technique especially as the schools restricted my visit to one day only. The calculated percentages of survey responses provide the quantitative data, and reveals any trends amongst the participants, with 'stories' and 'numbers' provided that can be helpful for decision-making (Creswell and Guetterman, 2019. p. 545). However, the qualitative data in this study far outweighs the quantitative data gathered.

3.3.2 **Interviews and Focus Groups**

Qualitative methods are used to provide information expressed by participants contextualized in the specific settings of their experiences. Semi-structured interviews and focus groups, in addition to a bi-lingual survey in Arabic and English were appropriately used as data collection methods in qualitative research (McMillan and Schumacher, 2001), and covered the same main topics throughout.

The advantage of interviews is that they enable gathering more in-depth data from individuals; and focus groups provide a multiplicity of views that enrich the data gathered within the same period of time as an interview for one individual (ibid.). This study gives more weight to the qualitative data gathered through these methods because that is where in-depth data was gathered, and notions were elaborated on through the face-to-face interactions.

Focus groups are often used to complement other methods for validity checking or to explore the degree of consensus on a given topic (Morgan, 1988): where applicable, responses of focus groups were compared to those of individual participants within the same school. Another benefit is that the focus groups provided a feel of the participants' inter-relationships one can detect through the tone and discourse of their interactions. Also, because there are several participants in a focus group, a wider variety of views can be gathered within the same time-frame as an interview of one individual.

In-depth interviews are characterized as a conversation with a goal, and present a primary source of rich data (McMillan and Schumacher, 2001). The benefit of face-to-face interviews is that once an interaction of trust is established, individuals feel more at ease in opening up regarding difficulties facing their performance. The data gathered through face-to-face encounters was given heaviest weight in the analysis, because that is the method that provided more flexibility in taking a slightly different course of interaction to probe into a matter deemed necessary, thus enriching the data; while the survey questionnaire created a balance because the same topics would be equally covered by the respondents. The advantages and limitations of each research method is discussed further in the sections below.

3.3.3 **The Survey**

The survey is a qualitative research method that serves to describe factors related to trends, attitudes, behaviours, and other phenomena (Denscombe,1998). Surveys can provide descriptive, inferential and explanatory information; and they generate numerical data (Cohen et al., 2007). Surveys are commonly used to gather data from a large number of participants for statistical reliability, although this was not the intention in this study, but rather to use the survey as a tool where all participants cover the same items that provide answers to the research questions, in case the dialogue in the interview had drifted such that not all the items were covered evenly. Also by comparing each individual participant's responses in the survey to that in the interview, can enable detecting any incoherence, hence implying a variety of issues that are discussed in the analysis of results section 3.6. In addition, the quantified responses in a survey enable us to account for trends or preferences of the respondents (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001). However, a survey is not the usual tool used for gathering in-depth views of people's experiences (ibid.).

3.3.3.1 Piloting of the Survey Questionnaire

The first step before using the survey was to conduct a pilot test of the questionnaire to ensure that questions are clear, concise, and unbiased; and whether as a tool it can elicit a quality and scope of data coverage that would elicit results that can be interpreted with reliability (McMillan and Schumacher, 2001). A draft form of the bi-lingual survey questionnaire was piloted with 6 colleagues at KHDA, mostly inspectors or previous teachers, of whom 4 were bi-lingual. Their feedback was that the topics of the questions covered the main issues in inclusion; but 5 individuals cautioned that different schools hold different understandings of inclusion, which was all the more reason to conduct my study. A few typo errors, and two minor remarks relating to the accuracy being reflected in the articulation of the questions in the two languages, were both addressed. I therefore decided to administer the survey only to the same participants in the interviews and focus groups, timed immediately after their interview was over to ensure all respondents are made aware of the meanings in the terms used.

3.4 The research questions of this study

In the survey questionnaire, the first question required the respondent to tick any or all of the three following statements to the question: My understanding of Inclusive Education is:

1. Accomodating students with diverse abilities together to enhance their social development;
2. Equal catering to the learning and progress of all students in a class;
3. Focusing attention on cases identified as having some disability.

The first statement draws from the social approach of UAE Federal Law (No. 29 of 2006), (UAE Official Gazette, 2006) which describes inclusion as focusing on the social development of students and is based on the expectation that school staff has been made familiar with the stipulation of this law. For clarity, the term 'social development' is used in this study in line with Dubai Law 2014, Article (3), to mean 'integrating Persons with Disabilities into society as effective members' (ibid.). The second and third statements would indicate compliance with Dubai government's aim to embed 'inclusion and equity in their educational policy and practice' (KHDA, 2019a, p.7).

The rest of the questions were closed-ended, with a choice of response to a 5-point Likert scale. The survey questions were arranged in three clusters, corresponding to the three remaining research questions, and were under the following headings:

- Cluster (II) for research question (1): Policies relating to inclusive education;
- Cluster (III) for research question(2): Teachers' perceptions of their abilities;
- Cluster (IV) for research question (3): Factors affecting teacher self-efficacy.

Cluster (IV) questions are based partly on the Index of Inclusion (Booth and Ainscow, 2002), and on factors identified in the Conceptual Framework, e.g, leadership support; staff relations; opportunities for teacher learning.

The aims and questions driving this study were to investigate how the variety of teachers from schools with different curricula and cultures regarding individuals with disabilities would perceive their abilities to cope with inclusive education in private schools in Dubai. Given the acknowledged importance of a teacher's perception of

her abilities when facing what is expected to be a new challenge, the inquiry seeks to verify their beliefs and views, and to provide insights on how to enhance their self-confidence to improve inclusion provision.

The research questions below guided the semi-structured interviews, and formed the basis for constructing the survey questionnaire, i.e., both the interview and the survey covered roughly the same topics. The first research question aims to elicit the understanding of a participant about concepts of inclusive education: whether it means mere social integration; or catering to all students; or particularly to students with disabilities; or any other understanding. Research questions 2-4 aim to elicit participants' views and thoughts, hence called for methods of research that would provide in-depth data regarding the 'what' and 'how' of their practices. The last research question is meant for the author to synthesise the findings of the study and how they position teacher-self-efficacy in inclusion.

1. What is the teachers' understanding of Inclusive Education for students with disabilities in low-performing private schools in Dubai?

2. What are teachers' views on how Inclusive Education is enacted in their low-performing schools?

3. How confident do teachers feel that they possess the abilities to cater for the learning needs of students experiencing disabilities?

4. What factors enhance/reduce teacher self-efficacy in relation to their experience as in inclusion practitioners?

5. How effective is the concept of self-efficacy in helping to identify and conceptualise the issues related to Inclusive Education?

3.4.1 **Reliability test of the Survey Questionnaire**

Cronbach's alpha was used as a measure to test for the reliability, or internal consistency, of the questions in the survey questionnaire, i.e., the reliability of the questions.

Using SPSS software, the responses of the fifty participants to all 22 questions for calculating Cronbach's alpha were entered and gave the reading of 0.834.

Table 3.1. Cronbach's alpha testing the internal consistency of the survey questions.

Reliability Statistics		
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	Number of Items
0.834	0.840	22

As can be seen in Table 4.2 below, the value of 0.8 and above is considered as good; hence there is a high consistency among the questions of the survey questionnaire.

Table 3.2. Values of Cronbach's alpha and their implications for research.

Cronbach's alpha	Internal consistency
$\alpha \geq 0.9$	Excellent
$0.9 > \alpha \geq 0.8$	Good
$0.8 > \alpha \geq 0.7$	Acceptable
$0.7 > \alpha \geq 0.6$	Questionable
$0.6 > \alpha \geq 0.5$	Poor
$0.5 > \alpha$	Unacceptable

3.5 Research Design

3.5.1 Rationale behind research methods used

This section clarifies the reasons for the selection of each research method to use, and the specific advantages of each.

Qualitative research methods were used because they allow flexibility and design modification as data are being gathered (McMillan and Schumacher, 2001), so that the flow of responses can vary in focus as per the experience of the respondent(s). For instance, this flexibility of qualitative methods enabled me to refrain from the initial intention of sending out the survey to all teachers in any school visited in addition to those interviewed, which normally gives a wider coverage of responses.

This flexibility also allows any sequence of data-gathering to be applied: whether qualitative followed by quantitative, or the other way round (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). As my visit to each school was restricted to one day only, the reasonable sequence to apply in this study was to conduct the interviews first, as these formed

the source of data of greater weight and would also enable to clarify to participants the meanings of inclusion-related terms before participants respond to the survey. This measure was intended to provide greater rigour in contributing knowledge gathered through an inductive approach to the existing gap in the fundamental step of understanding what inclusion is about prior to probing into their self-efficacy in inclusion. Also when both qualitative and quantitative methods are used concurrently, (ibid.), i.e., they were gathered within the same timeframe with the intention of collating their responses to interpret and analyse their content both for convergence and explanatory purposes, their results may be collated and analysed together (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2010). When an individual participant gives similar responses in both research methods, this may be related to confidence and clarity of understanding; while in case different responses are given in each research method is an indication of an individual's apprehension or bias or both, which is a case that would warrant further probing.

Since countries of the world differ in the inclusion definitions and implementations, (Haug, 2017), and teachers in this study are likely to be influenced by their home-country practices in inclusion, the first question to ask all the participants in this study aimed to verify how participants understand inclusion, and how schools enact the Dubai Inclusion Policy Framework (DIEPF) issued in 2017 (KHDA, 2017), especially as their understanding would impact their responses to the rest of the questions in this study.

Interviews and focus group meetings are face-to-face interactions with respondents and provide the opportunity to detect body language or verbal messages that can lead to unforeseen aspects that were not included in the survey questionnaire: an example is the importance teachers in some schools made of their empathetic approach to students experiencing disabilities, as this is not among the school inspection criteria and is not recorded anywhere in the secondary sources of data in spite of its positive impact on learning interactions of students experiencing disability (Barr, 2013). In both individual and focus group interviews, participants' iterations were audio-recorded and transcribed. Transcriptions were coded for

variables that enable responding to the research questions, as well as for other unforeseen themes that appear to impact teacher self-confidence in their abilities in inclusion. Interviews conducted in Arabic, which is my mother tongue, were translated into English. In every encounter, the survey was handed out to the same individuals who participated in an interview or focus group meeting.

The survey questionnaire consisted of 24 closed-ended questions of the survey required the respondents' opinion on a 5-level Likert scale for statements provided as response options to select from, which enables to quantify the responses on trends and views (Creswell, 2014, p.42). This adds value to the study as it generates meaning for various audiences, particularly policy-makers (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2010) for a more visual presentation of results. Responses to the survey questions were compared for each participant with those given face-to-face, which enabled checking for divergence.

In terms of timeframe, since interviews and surveys were conducted almost concurrently and with the same participants, their collated data are analysed and interpreted together (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2010). Where I did find divergences when analysing the data, I would play once more the audio recordings of participants to check for any data from interviews that I may have missed or misunderstood. Survey responses were checked against interview responses of individual participants: where divergence was found, the quantified responses gave an indication of how far apart are the results of the two research methods, and is referred to in the analysis of results. The next step was to compare the survey results with those of the coded responses obtained in the interviews and focus group meetings, as summarized in the tables in Chapter 4 on Findings. Then followed a cross- case analysis amongst schools of the same group as well as across the three school groups, which hypothesizes that cognition involves mobilizing knowledge from individual case studies by comparing and contrasting these cases, thus producing new knowledge (Khan and Vanwynsberghe, 2008).The total qualitative and quantitative data are then collated, interpreted, and analysed (Tashakkori and

Teddlie, 2010), and the results are expected to elicit approaches that may enhance teacher self-efficacy.

This is an example of how collated data from different research methods present the value of complementing each other in the information gathered and thus provide 'a very powerful mix' of data (Miles, et al. 2014., p.44) for a more complete understanding of the issue at hand, and with the results of one method validating those of the other. Otherwise, discrepancies between the two were either areas that warrant further research for clarification; or were explained through the qualitative data gathered in the interviews and focus group meetings, as these provided far more information than the survey. In addition, the KHDA published reports, and the judgements and ratings given in the School Inspection Reports available on KHDA website were used as secondary sources of data for triangulation with the study results, as they present additional sources of reliable information that can augment the information from the combined data gathered.

3.5.2 **Purposive Selection of Schools**

The targeted population in this study are teachers, bounded by schools (or 'cases') characterized for their low-performance. However, to access those teachers as elements who are informative about the topic of interest (McMillan and Schumacher, 2001), was made possible only through a purposive selection of relevant schools.

The School Inspection Reports presented the source of information from which to select the schools by using as criteria the overall school rating, and the rating of inclusion provision, which are both available for public information on KHDA website. As can be seen from the online School Inspection Reports for the year 2017-2018, three of the schools in this study were each given one of the below descriptions:

- 'Action Plans drawn for students with Special Educational Needs (SEN) were not appropriately well-informed;
- The Individual Educational Plans (IEP) are rarely featured in the lesson;

- IEPs are not specific and therefore students' assessments do not produce reliable data to evaluate progress accurately.'

A list was drawn of the schools that have repeatedly been rated 'acceptable' or less in their overall and inclusion performance prior to 2017- 2018, which was the year of the most recent school inspection report before the study was conducted in May 2019. The selection criteria were found to apply in 45 schools on KHDA website and were mostly schools that offer a curriculum from the following countries: USA, India, UK, and the UAE national curriculum of the Ministry of Education (MoE). To limit the scope of schools to be visited, twelve schools were selected, three of each curriculum-type, with Emirati students comprising a sizable portion of their student populations. As per KHDA regulations, the first step was to obtain approval regarding the topic of my research. An email was then sent to the school principals with a brief about my research topic and its purpose; my request to interview teachers of any grades from pre-school to Grade nine; and about my commitment for confidentiality and anonymity of the school and its staff. This was followed up by a phone call three days later to answer any questions the principal may have; to get their consent for the visit and to plan the date for the school visit. Finally, seven schools agreed to a one-day visit during May 2019. There were 3 schools offering a US-curriculum; 2 offering a UK-curriculum; and 2 offering the MoE curriculum of the UAE. However, indicating a school by its curriculum is not intended to relate to the content of curriculum, but rather to a type of context that has a specific culture, governance and leadership that are typical of each type of school.

From the above details of research design, it should be noted that the purposive sampling method was used for selecting schools on the basis of its rated low performance, but in fact the study's target were the teachers in those schools. Based on the premise that their views regarding inclusion and their related self-efficacy are presumably formed within their specific school contexts (Bandura, 1977), a brief description of these contexts is provided in Chapter Four on School Profiles, in addition to the data in responses of the participants. Participants in this study may have been selected purposively by the school principal based, whether due to an internal school interest e.g., as the best-performing teachers in inclusion in the school;

or only to fulfill my request for variety in their individual experience, grades taught, gender, etc. It is also likely that the participants were a 'convenience sample' i.e., forwarded as per availability within the school schedule. Whichever is the case, the research methods would still be the same (McMillan and Schumacher, 2001, p. 175) but this issue will be taken into account in the analysis of findings.

This study sheds light on the importance of teacher self-efficacy in inclusion and highlights the factors that enhance or impede this construct in low-performing private schools in Dubai. Although steps have been taken to improve inclusion provision in these schools, yet most are still at an early developmental stage in implementing inclusion (AlKhateeb, 2016); and the research literature shows there is hardly any attention to teacher self-efficacy in their abilities to effectively face the challenges of inclusion in developing countries of the region.

As participants in this study are multinational expatriates from countries with wide differences in their experience in inclusion, understanding their perspective of inclusion as currently practiced in their schools can be instrumental for planning training programmes tailored to address their needs and probably those of schools elsewhere with similar contexts; and for making recommendations to address aspects in their school contexts that negatively impact their self-efficacy in inclusion.

3.5.2.1 School selection and school ratings

Given the variety of curricula offered in Dubai private schools, each with its own culture and educational philosophy, and therefore the difficulty in comparing their provision, one of the benefits of the School Inspection Framework (SIF) is that it has created a unified lexicon of educational terms and concepts for a shared understanding of the terminology being used, and are more familiar with how their performance is assessed. SIF forms the basis of school evaluations and has been found to be positively associated with school quality assurance as a quality control tool (El Saadi, 2017; AlKutich and Abukari, 2018). Moreover, the standards used to evaluate school performance are internationally agreed as standards of academic quality; hence these standards present a common foundation against which to benchmark the performance of the schools concerned in the study.

The diagrams for both grades 4 and 8 (Figure 3.1 and Figure 3.2) show that student results (shown as average scores obtained in Mathematics and in Science in TIMSS in 2011), are aligned with the school ratings (KHDA and IEA, 2012, pp. 73-77). TIMSS is an assessment that is widely used for an international benchmarking of student learning skills: students in schools rated as Outstanding also scored highest in TIMSS and vice versa for those rated as weak. In schools rated by KHDA as 'acceptable' and 'weak', (grey and red lines) students scored beneath the 500-score international average in TIMSS in both grades 4 and 8, showing alignment of the rating criteria of both KHDA and TIMSS.

Alignment of these criteria, both using standards internationally acknowledged as reliable makes the measure of school rating a fairly reliable criterion for selecting the schools to visit in this study since the targeted schools are those characterized as weak in overall performance, regardless of any other variables related to teacher qualifications and legacies of culture that are not taken into account. Given the awareness that these international assessments do not relate to students experiencing disabilities as they are excluded from these assessments, yet for the objective of finding measures to select schools for this study, they both use criteria and standards recognized as describing what is generally viewed as quality education.

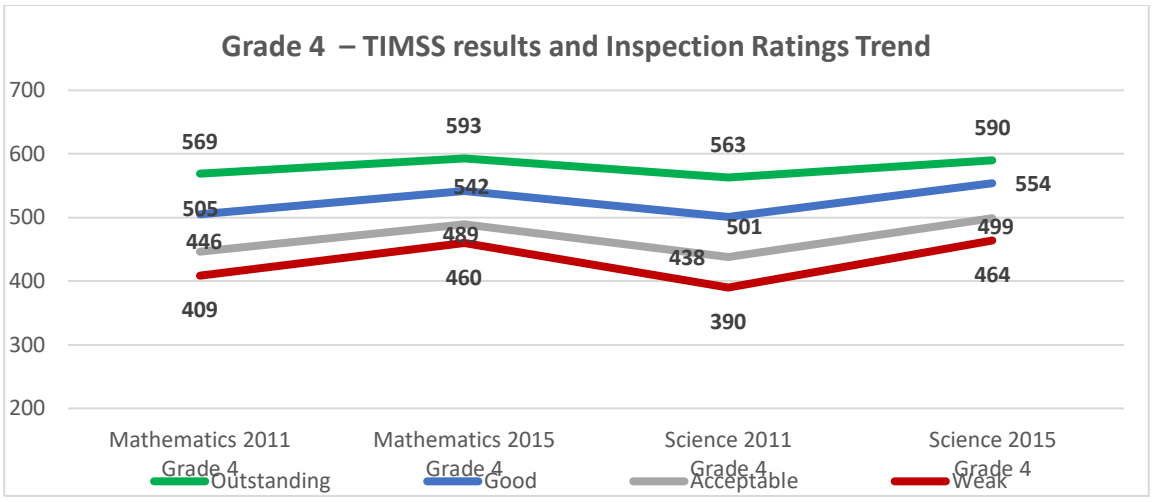

Figure 2: Matching results between student scores in TIMSS (Grade 4) and level of school ranking (KHDA & IEA, 2012)

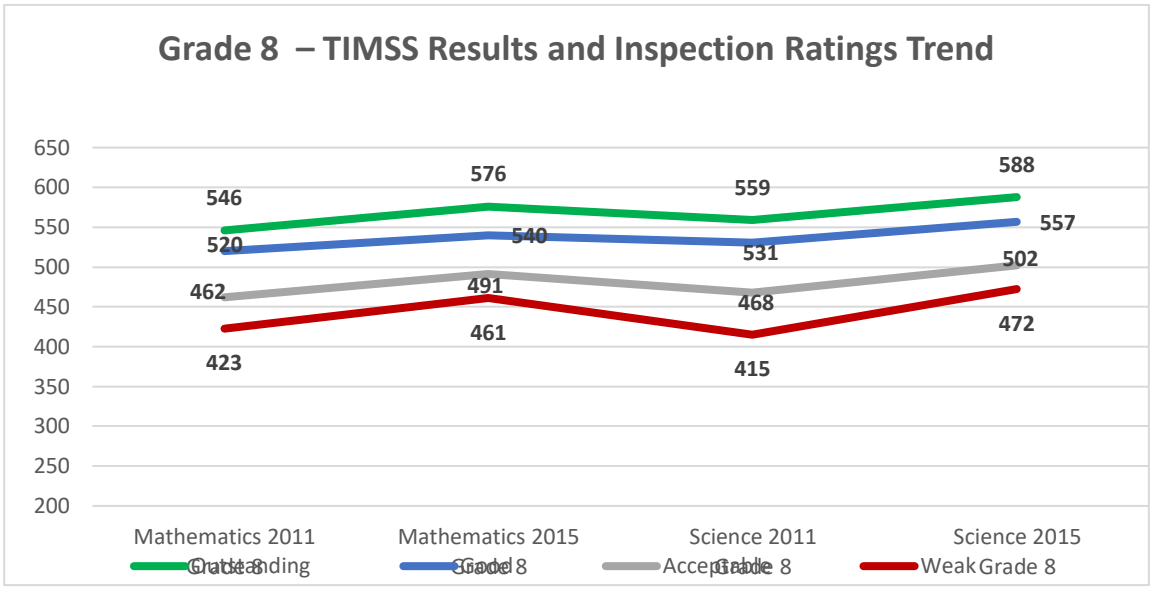

Figure 3. Matching results between student scores in TIMSS (Grade 8) and level of school ranking (KHDA & IEA , 2012)

Limitation of sources for sampling

The School Inspection Reports are the source of information policy makers in Dubai government rely on for issuing policies, and in the absence of any other source of information on inclusion in private schools in Dubai are official documents with quality judgements that have research value (Selim, 2016) as they establish an official record of the quality of schooling.

However, an imperfection of the system is that it is likely to breed a trend of 'teaching for the test' in schools, thus by rating the extent to which a school achieves the National Agenda Parameter, i.e., how well students are performing in TIMSS and PISA, there is a multiplied effect of student scores on the league tables as an only measure of 'quality'. A sentence in the 'School Inspection Supplement; 2017-2018', a document issued in 2018 by KHDA, states the following, which appears as an encouragement to teach for the test (Dubai School Inspection Bureau, KHDA, 2018, p.6):

> 'During the 2017-18 academic year, schools should focus particularly on Grade 3 and Grade 7 (UK schools Years 4 and 8), because students in these grades will be taking TIMSS in 2019.'

Also, the fact that only a one-day visit was enabled for each school is likely to have limited the variety of teacher views that would have been gathered otherwise gathered. However, even with the number of participants provided, there was a sense of saturation of views gathered for each school type.

3.6 Analysis of Data

As this study is for the most part a qualitative research, inductive reasoning is primarily employed: primary data is obtained from peoples' perceptions and realities, from which a synthesis is produced to explain the phenomenon in a narrative description, which includes participants' language and meanings experience (McMillan and Schumacher, 2001). As the gathered data accumulated, the research problem is reformulated so that data closely represent the reality of the participants' lived (ibid.). This explains how I had to modify my course of questions from my use of terms initially relating to IE, over to 'inclusion', as understood and practiced by most of the participants.

The deductive reasoning in this inquiry is typically related to the stage of data analysis, by referring to the constructs in the Conceptual Framework, and by triangulating the findings against reliable secondary sources of data such as KHDA reports and publications, and international organisations such as OECD and others. Such deductive reasoning has the benefit of locating the findings of the study within the wider picture of knowledge from related research.

In qualitative research, the validity of qualitative design; the critical reflexivity of the author, and the authenticity of the data gathered are among the attributes that render rigour to the findings of a research. Validity of qualitative design depends to a large extent on 'the degree to which the interpretations and concepts have mutual meanings between the participants and the researcher' (McMillan and Schumacher, 2001, p.407). For greater authenticity and credibility of the data gathered, a step I always took throughout the interviews and focus group meetings is to recapitulate at the end of every round of responses gathered on any one item and requesting their confirmation that I have captured their messages truthfully, so they have control of the authenticity of data they have imparted.

Critical reflexivity is a strategy whereby as a researcher, I need to be constantly assessing my actions throughout the encounters, whether all voices were allowed to be heard (ibid.). Even outliers, or individuals with far-fetched ideas, were included and their data appear in sections dedicated to their views. This was especially challenging in focus group meetings, but my awareness of its importance alerted me to get all participants to express their views on each topic. Authenticity is the faithful reporting of the participants' views and beliefs: to that end, the various steps undertaken of coding responses, comparing responses on the same item from interviews and the survey both within the same school group and across the three school groups are means to achieve authenticity and trustworthiness in producing the final information. In addition, to ensure the right messages were captured and none were left out, I would listen once more to the audio-recorded interviews.

To analyse the qualitative data, all responses from interviews and focus groups were entered into an excel sheet for each school type, a sample of which is provided in Appendix 2. These were coded and grouped into themes that answer the research questions and were then presented in the various tables in Chapter 4 on Findings and summarised in Boxes 4.1- 4.9. Survey responses are provided in a table for each research question, showing the percentages of responses of all three school types. These survey responses are triangulated with the coded qualitative responses to check for coherence in responses on all data collecting tools. The summary of the

emerging themes from this qualitative analysis is provided in Chapter 4 on Findings, section 4.2.2 on Emerging Themes.

3.6.1 Analysis of results by the Pareto rule

The wealth of data produced in this study can be used to validate the main causes for the wavering self-efficacy of teachers in this study and help schools to prioritise the issues to address. The underlying concept of the Pareto rule is that the majority of problems (roughly 80%) are often caused by a relatively small number of factors (roughly 20%). This principle, or the 80/20 rule, is applied as a measure of quality control, and to enable an analysis of the most common causes responsible for producing a failure or defects in a process (Wilkinson, 2006), with the implication that for greater efficiency, by addressing only 2-3 causes, 80 per cent of defects can be eliminated (Law, 2016). This Pareto rule is used to validate the conclusions of this study.

The chart is constructed by using an excel sheet on which are entered all the factors reported by participants as negatively impacting their self-efficacy in one column, each with the total number of times they were reported both in all three research tools used (interviews, focus group meetings, and the survey). The items are the arranged in descending order of the number of times they were reported; the percentage of occurrence of each item is calculated from the total number of items; and finally the last column is the cumulative percentage for each item calculated with the help of a formula from the excel sheet. The diagram of the chart produced indicates the main but few factors that are causing most of the drawbacks. Results are given in Chapter 4, section 4.4.

3.7 Ethical Issues

3.7.1 Anonymity and Confidentiality

In qualitative research, important ethical concerns need to be taken into account: anonymity, confidentiality and informed consent of the participants (Cohen et al., 2007). As sensitivity or feelings of discomfort to discuss are expected to be aroused by the topic of the research, the first step was to try to earn the participants' trust. A

print-out of a sheet of 'informed consent' is handed out to all participants listing my responsibility and commitment to the following aspects:

- My commitment to confidentiality of information disclosed, and anonymity of the interviewees and their schools;
- Interviews are conducted only on the basis of a participant's voluntary informed consent;
- The participant's right to withdraw at any time;
- Transparency on my position in the regulatory authority; and that their participation will in no way cause them harm either directly, or in their relationships with the authority, the school leadership, colleagues, students and parents;
- The content of their responses shall be kept with utmost confidentiality. Data imparted shall be stored temporarily up to completion of the study, following which all recordings and transcriptions shall be deleted.

This introduction was an effective ice-breaker, following which participants showed readiness, and some were even excited to have their views heard. The informed consent is a critical requirement for research projects that may incur any kind of harm to the participant and is legally liable. However, where no such risk is involved, literature states it is not a necessity (ibid.), but I found that presenting the terms of the contract-like consent in written form to be signed by both participant and researcher, sealed it with an air of seriousness and transparency that almost instantly put them at ease, and was effective in conveying my respect of their views and in extending my appreciation of their participation. Appendix 4 is a copy of the letter of Consent to be Interviewed.

At the onset of every encounter, I would request that all participants give me pseudonyms instead of their real names, and write that same name on the survey questionnaire. Thus, on the one hand their anonymity would be ensured; and on the other hand, when analysing the results, it would enable me to make the link between each individual's responses in the survey to those s/he iterated in the interviews.

3.7.2 **Reliability**

Cronbach alpha, used to test the reliability of the survey questionnaire was performed and showed a score of 0.834, considered as 'good', as elaborated on in section 3.4.1 above.

3.7.3 **Validity**

Validity of qualitative research 'is the degree to which the interpretations and concepts have *mutual* meanings between the participants and the researcher' (McMillan and Schumacher, 2001, p. 407). As explained earlier in this chapter, this was a regular step I took once a topic was covered, where I would summarise the participants' responses, and request their confirmation that I have captured their intended meanings.

The use of a combination of as many strategies as possible in qualitative research, both in the data collection and analysis, is viewed as enhancing validity (ibid.). In this study, the use of a survey to gather data from the same participants in the interviews and focus group meetings provided stronger credibility; wherever possible, the data obtained would also be triangulated with professionally reliable secondary sources of data, i.e., the School Inspection Reports, which base their judgements on standards of performance widely recognized as describing quality education provision. These judgements were taken from the latest School Inspection Reports for the year preceding the time when the empirical data was gathered in May 2019, i.e., for the year 2017-2018.

Among the primary validity criteria in qualitative research is what Lincoln and Guba (1985) called 'trustworthiness', further described as fulfilling the following four criteria (Whittemore et al., (2001):

1. Credibility, i.e., whether the results are an accurate interpretation of the participants' meaning:

   As indicated above, this was a regular step taken.

2. Authenticity, i.e., are different voices heard?

   The variety of responses captured within and across schools were true to their origin.

3. Criticality, i.e., is there a critical appraisal of all aspects of the research?
   Care was taken to follow such an appraisal throughout the analysis.
4. Integrity, i.e., are the investigators self-critical?
   To receive honest responses from the participants, I was careful in presenting my questions with impartiality and respect of their views, in a non-judgemental approach in seeking information about their experiences.

3.8 Limitations of the study

Following the purposive selection of schools for this multi-case study, the selection of participants for this study was entirely at the discretion of the school principal. Any bias in the principal's selection of interviewees will have affected the nature of teacher responses; however, the variation in teachers' views gathered even within the same school-type somewhat counteracts the effect of any likely bias.

The duration of the school visit was another limitation, as it was approved for one day only, with the least disruption to the schedule of classes. Therefore the 45 minutes I was allocated for any encounter was used for interviewing individuals or focus groups because that is where the in-depth data can be gathered, while the survey was administered during the last few minutes. Responses to the survey were generally more positive than those in the interviews and focus groups: this was expected, because participants would be wary of recording a negative response in written form.

Although a common trend in research is to use a survey as the first research method (Creswell, 2019), following which an interview later on can be steered to seek elaboration on any issues wherever necessary. Some may view this sequence of research methods as a limitation, but as there was no opportunity for a second visit to the school, my expectation was that the responses would be still more strongly biased due to the sensitivity the topic is likely to raise. I also needed first to take the time to earn the participants' consent and trust to participate, and to make sure they had the same understanding of the inclusion-related terms used in this study. Had I started first with the survey, the misconceptions of these terms and of

what inclusive education is about would have produced results that would have been difficult to compare. Therefore, starting first with the interviews enabled me to convey the meanings of the inclusion-related terms I was using, to make sure there was a common understanding by all.

Another likely limitation is the fact that no other researchers besides myself participated in gathering the empirical data, hence there was no opportunity to enrich the information gathered with another person's observations. On the other hand, any bias on my part as a researcher interacting with the participants would make such bias more of a context than a limitation, as it was a constant variable maintained across all encounters.

3.9 Time and duration of the study

All visits of the seven schools in this study were conducted during the month of May 2019, right before schools were getting ready for the busy time with the end-of-year student assessments. This restricted the time made available to conduct the encounters with participants to one day, and only during the formal work hours of a school.

Each interview lasted 40-45 minutes and was audio-recorded. I was the sole person to conduct the interviews, to transcribe the recordings, and translate those conducted in Arabic, as per the preference of the participant, into English; and to code the responses. As Arabic is my mother tongue, there were no language issues involved that could have affected our mutual understanding. In addition, in all the interviews in both Arabic and English, I would verify my understanding of the content of the responses by frequently requesting the respondents' reaction to my recapitulating on the issue being discussed.

3.10 Summary

The research methodology and design were selected to enable gathering the depth and breadth of data desired to answer the research questions of this study, and to investigate all the factors affecting teacher self-efficacy as indicated in the Conceptual Framework in Chapter 1. The research methods used also take into consideration the time restriction of the schools visited in this study, while taking the

necessary measures described above to ensure the trustworthiness, validity and reliability of the data produced.

Chapter Four provides the findings, followed by Discussion and Analysis in Chapter Five.

4 CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This inquiry set out to gain better insights on teacher self-efficacy in inclusive education (IE), and the data gathered from the responses of all participants illustrate the complex construct that is self-efficacy: at the core are the dynamics of teacher-student reciprocal interaction that is affected by many school factors, as can be seen in the Conceptual Framework, chapter 1, section 1.9. A teacher's behaviour is planned to influence the student's learning, and the outcomes serve as feedback for the teacher's self- judgement of her own actions, regarding the extent of her success. Other factors in the school environment are at play, but to understand how they judge their abilities, the participants' responses need to be taken in their respective contexts as described in the school profiles in the preceding Chapter Four.

4.1.1 Layout of sections in this chapter

-Section 4.2 presents the Research Questions of this study.

-Section 4.3 is the Presentation of Results, arranged into three sub-sections:

- Sub-section 4.3.1 Provides an overview of responses to Research Question (1) on 'My understanding of inclusive education', since it forms the basis for all views and beliefs expressed by the participants in the rest of the data gathered. Detailed responses to this first question are provided in the subsection for all the research questions in sub-section 4.3.2.

- Sub-section 4.3.2 Main Emerging Themes: For easier reading, and to put the detailed results in context, this sub-section provides up-front summary of the main findings presented as themes that emerged from all the responses.

- Sub-section 4.3.3 is the Details of Responses to Research Questions 1-4, which comprises two parts for each research question, arranged in the following sequence:

Part One: Interview and focus group results: data are presented in a table per school type with coded quotes of responses from the participants.

Part Two: Survey results: a box outlines the rationale behind each group of the survey questions; followed by a table with the responses from all schools presented as percentages of participants from each school type, ticking their choice from a 5-level Likert scale of options.

A box with a summary of all responses obtained is provided for each research question, taking into consideration any divergence from the interview responses, and making the link to how these findings answer the research questions of the study.

- Sub-section 4.3.5: Layout of data for research question 4.

4.2 Research Questions and Conceptual Framework

Below are the research questions of this study: for which data was gathered to provide answers to this inquiry. Question 1 verifies what IE means to the participants; question 2 seeks their views on their lived experience within their respective schools regarding the inclusive education practices they are required to implement, to verify their knowledge of the DIEPF policy and their practices accordingly. This question is based on Policy Enactment, one of the theories underlying the Conceptual Framework. As the authorities have required schools to focus their efforts on students with disabilities, Question 3 seeks to know how teachers perceive their own abilities to cater for the cases of disabilities in their classrooms; and question 4 highlights factors of their specific school environments that affect their self-efficacy as seen from the teachers' perspective, and is based on the Social Cognitive Theory which underlies the Conceptual Framework, illustrated in the diagram in Chapter 1, section 1.9.

6. What is the teachers' understanding of Inclusive Education for students with disabilities in low-performing private schools in Dubai?

7. What are teachers' views on how Inclusive Education is enacted in their low-performing schools?

8. How confident do teachers feel that they possess the abilities to cater for the learning needs of students experiencing disabilities?

9. What factors enhance/reduce teacher self-efficacy in relation to their experience as in inclusion practitioners?

10. How effective is the concept of self-efficacy in helping to identify and conceptualise the issues related to Inclusive Education?

Research question 3 focuses on the self-efficacy of individual teachers. The construct of collective efficacy is not among those in the Conceptual Framework because collective efficacy is an emergent phenomenon.

4.3 Presentation of Results

4.3.1 Overview of Research Question (1)

Understandings of inclusive education

Given the awareness that countries of the world differ in their implementation of inclusive education (Ainscow and Miles, 2009; OECD, 2020), the first research question aimed at verifying the understandings of participants in the three school types. This first question given in Box 4.1 below puts the results of the whole study in context, as it underlies the responses to the rest of the questions and indicates the broad basis on which lie the views and beliefs of the participants.

Box 4.1 Survey Question(1) : *My understanding of inclusive education is*:

a. *Accomodating students with diverse abilities together to enhance their **social development.***
b. ***Equal catering** to the learning and progress of all students in a class.*
c. *Focusing attention on cases identified as having some **disability**.*

With respect to Question (1), respondents were asked to tick any or all three statements (a,b, and c). Table 4.1 below summarises the responses.

Table 4.1 Interview and survey responses from all school types to research question (1): 'My understanding of Inclusive education'.

Response Statements to Question1: My understanding of inclusive education	**Interview & Focus group Responses**			**Survey Responses**		
	2 MoE schools n=12	**3 US schools n=25**	**2 UK schools n=13**	**2 MoE schools n=12**	**3 US schools n=25**	**2 UK schools n=13**
a)Social development (Integration)	**80%**	**60%**	**70%**	63%	**69%**	**69%**
b)Catering to all students	**0%**	50%	40%	50%	52%	42%
c)Catering to students with Disability	**100%**	10%	_	**82%**	38%	33%

The respondent can choose to agree with any or all of the three response statements. For each response statement, the above percentages indicate the proportion of participants selecting that response out of the total number of participants in each school type. The figures show that overall, 'social development' is the most common understanding of all participants and is in agreement with many other countries in the world, as pointed out in Chapter 2, section 2.2, albeit with their differences whether this means 'development' of the students' potential, or rather their social integration.

For the response 'catering to all students', roughly half the participants in US and UK schools in this study indicated their understanding that this is what IE is about. This result suggests a likely low awareness of DIEPF, with participants in MoE schools being at the extreme end of lack of awareness (0%).

Responses indicate the following results:

1. Teachers in MoE schools: 'disability' was the topmost choice (100%), in apparent compliance with the UAE federal policy rather than DIEPF. These schools apply the medical model of inclusion and use a pedagogy of special educational needs applied as per MoE instructions (MoE, School for All, 2010).

- **The first choice of 'disability'** shows responses were aligned from interviews (100%) and survey (82%).

- **The second choice is 'Social development'**, (which meant to most participants 'integration'), at 80%, also aligned as a second choice in the survey (63%).

2. For both US and UK schools, the choices were as follows, in descending order of priority, both in the interviews and focus groups, and in the survey:

Social development > Catering to students of all abilities > Catering to students with disabilities.

In the interviews and focus group meetings, a discussion followed to provide examples of their practices to illustrate what IE is about. Their transcribed responses were coded for the notions and practices they presented which relate to IE, and mounted on an excel sheet; related codes were collated, producing 4 themes of collated codes of the quotes presented in Table 4.2 below. This method of coding quotes and collating them into themes is followed throughout the study to answer any of the research questions, or to produce other unpredicted notions.

Table 4.2 Percentages of coded quotes from interviews and focus group meetings from three school types regarding practices of inclusion.

Themes of Collated Codes of Quotes	Interview & Focus group Responses		
	2 MoE schools n=12	3 US schools n=25	2 UK schools n=13
Differentiated teaching	10%	20%	_
Empathetic approach	25%	10%	_
Applying medical model	20%	_	_
Education is a basic human right	_	20%	30%

The above results of the collated codes in the interviews indicate an awareness, though weak, of the following issues in inclusive education:

a) Differentiated teaching was mentioned by only a few respondents in MoE and US schools, suggesting it is not a common practice in these schools.

b) An empathetic approach is preliminary to learning (US and MoE schools), indicating the emphasis is on the well-being of students within their social integration as a priority over learning.

c) 'Education is a basic human right' (US and UK schools), indicating a more holistic understanding of what inclusive education is about, which positively influences teacher attitudes towards students experiencing disabilities, and which underlies the teaching and learning activities.

4.3.2 **Main Emerging Themes of Findings**

This sub-section presents the main themes that emerged from the total responses received through a coding of the participants' responses, as explained above for Table 4.2; similarly, responses to the survey questions were gathered and summed up by school type. As a common practice in mixed-methods studies is to combine results obtained through different research tools used in order to produce richer and more reliable data (Stake, 1995; Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2003; Denzin, 2015), the percentage of responses of the coded themes from the interviews would be triangulated with the percentage responses in the survey in the corresponding questions. Where divergence does occur, this is taken up in the analysis of results with a heavier weight given to the data from interviews as other related information gathered in the interviews would often explain such divergence, hence justifies their heavier weighting. Where no explanation is available to explain the divergence would generally suggest the need for deeper investigation in further research.

The emerging themes summarized below are aspects that underlie many drawbacks in the schools in this study and could well be used as aspects to prioritise working on towards improving school environment factors that may lead to enhancing teacher self-efficacy. Each theme is elaborated on with further details in subsection (4.2.3) on Details of Responses to Research Questions 2-4.

As a result of the participants' different notions of what IE is about, each school type appears to implement IE in accordance with the school's own internal policy. Judged against the requirements of DIEPF as a point of reference in this study, these notions are considered as misconceptions. In addition, to complicate things

further, inclusion-related terms hold different definitions in accordance with the specific philosophical approach the schools have adopted (i.e., whether the medical model or the social rights-based model), each of which prescribes a different series of actions to implement. Below are some examples of this ambiguity of connotation.

Theme (1) Various understandings of inclusive education (IE):

In each school type, IE is understood to focus on different objectives of IE, and diversity exists across and within the school types. Responses to all the other research questions are affected by the specific understanding in each case.

Theme (2): Misconceptions of terminology in inclusive education

The same terminology is used by all schools in this study, but terms hold different meanings depending on how each school understands IE. As a result, the series of actions taken in IE would differ.

i)Disability: In the Gulf countries, the word 'disability' is often substituted with 'special needs' (Gaad, 2011, p.13). Such misconceptions have wide implications on the educational provisions planned accordingly.

In the MoE and two of the three US schools that apply the medical model of inclusion, teachers fail to distinguish between impairment, disability, and students described as low achievers as measured by curriculum-centric assessments. In these schools, these students are identified as 'disabled', and commonly viewed as possessing a limited capacity to achieve. The action taken is to generally offer them a reduced curriculum both in quantity and level of difficulty. Assessments are curriculum-centred and measures student achievement in terms of retention of knowledge acquired in rote learning. Exclusion measures are used such as pull-out of the identified student from the common learning environment with their peers, to separately provide individual or small-group instruction. The notion of barriers to learning and the concept underlying the social model of inclusion are not the norm in these four schools; while in the other three schools, early new steps have been recently applied in their transition to the social model of inclusion.

ii) Social development: For 22 teachers in four of the seven schools visited in this study, the term means social integration, or mere placement of students experiencing SEND in a mainstream class where the student is expected to fit in with no adaptations made (UNICEF, 2017, p.3). Only two of the five interviewees who related to 'social development' were clear that it is not the mere physical accommodation of a SEND student in a mainstream class, but that it is about implementing activities to develop the students' potential in preparation for full social and future work life, in line with targets of Vision2021, the UAE strategic plan.

iii) Differentiation: 24 teachers in four schools in this study stated that their leaderships' guidance on how to 'differentiate' learning amounted to limiting the curriculum by reducing or omitting sections the teacher would subjectively view as 'above the level' of the student and are too challenging for the student experiencing disability, or based on teacher preference. This belief shared among almost 50 percent of all participants (24/50) in this study that students experiencing disabilities have inferior abilities, is typical of a medical model of inclusion, and is the same understanding and practice found in another study in Dubai more than ten years back (Gaad and Khan, 2007).

iv) Individualised education plans (IEP):

An IEP is defined as '*a continuous and collaborative process of development, implementation, and review'* produced for a student with disability, and is designed to reduce the barriers to the student's learning and progress (KHDA, 2019b, p.21). Teachers in MoE and US schools generally stated they feel self-confident in their abilities to produce or to implement an IEP, yet their description of how an IEP is formed shows that rather than referring to a continuous process, 16 teachers in four schools described their 'IEP' as support they provided for some time, following which the students often became capable of learning independently without assistance. Such support is better described as scaffolding, or techniques applied in a temporary intervention through which the student gradually assumes responsibility for learning.

With these three basic elements in teachers' practices being misconceived, whatever self-judgements they make of their abilities would relate to other tasks they may have accomplished, but not to self-efficacy in IE as required by DIEPF. Therefore, where teachers in MoE and two US schools expressed high self-confidence in producing an IEP should be contextualized within the specific task they performed.

Theme (3): Policy Enactment

In five of the seven schools in this study, many of the responses showed that IE practices diverge from those required by the Dubai policies on inclusion (DIEPF) because of lack or limited knowledge of the policy, which appeared to be a main reason for their school being given a low rating.

The schools visited have varying levels of knowledge of the DIEPF: about half the participants (24) in five of the seven schools in this study were not aware of the policy, and stated that instead, they are held accountable to the internal school policies.

Policy Enactment Knowledge of the requirements of a policy are expected to assist school staff in planning their teaching and the targets to be met.

In the five schools mentioned above, leadership had either skimmed through its content superficially with their staff or did not communicate it at all. Teachers generally knew very little about DIEPF and of KHDA's Inclusive Education Framework (IEF), although the School Inspection teams at KHDA judge and rate their teaching practices against its standards. Instead, in terms of planning and implementation, teaching strategies are planned by middle-level leadership, and teachers are considered agents who carry out instructions and are held accountable to the internal school policies. Teachers generally expressed their wish to be enabled to take part in any discussion or decision-making process that affects their teaching practices. This issue came up within the participants' responses regarding their self-evaluation on their teaching practices in inclusion, and accordingly, their contribution to the school self-evaluation report required annually by KHDA. In six

schools, 28 teachers reported that planning of teaching and processes for action are passed top-down as instructions to abide by within organizational structures that are strictly hierarchical.

When asked about the support to guide teachers through the required inclusion practices, participants in three schools reported they were only informed at the beginning of the school year that they had to observe student behaviour and detect any cases of weakness, following which they would have 1-2 sessions of guidance throughout the first school term. In three other schools, teachers stated insufficient availability of guidance as their only resources for help were one SEN-specialist and one Student Counsellor. Thus, under-staffing of the right specialists appears to be shared in the six schools and are far less than the ratio required by DIEPF. However, in four schools, one participant at middle-level leadership in each school were interviewed, and showed a better understanding of IE, indicating new processes are being introduced to make teachers more knowledgeable of inclusive practices.

Theme (4) Incoherence of School Practices

Most of the participants in six of the seven schools visited raised the following issues relating to the way inclusive education is implemented, showing the below examples of incoherence with a vision of a holistically inclusive school, where structures, processes and actions are not well coordinated:

-Inaccuracy in identifying SEND cases is common: these are often discovered some time after a teacher receives an individualized education plan (IEP) to follow, which turns out to be irrelevant. Most teachers in four schools stated they trust the knowledge they had acquired through their own experience about disability more than the diagnostic reports they receive through school leadership.

-Belated Individualised Education Plan (IEP): Teachers need to wait at least 2 months before they receive the IEP to follow for a student experiencing SEND, although MoE regulations indicate an IEP should start within a period of two weeks (MoE, 2010). During this initial period, guidance on the appropriate teaching

practices to apply is limited or lacking; and learning targets are often not clearly identified, leaving teachers uncertain about the practices to use. Teachers find this frustrating, which fails to enhance their self-efficacy in inclusion. In addition, when cases of disability are inaccurately identified, teachers are made less confident about the validity of the IEP and their belief is further strengthened in the teaching practices they applied with previous cases and from which they had learned (Bandura, 1997). One teacher summed up the general frustration as follows:

> 'We need clear support from management and middle leaders! Having to wait for two months before you receive any report on the condition of the SEN child is very demanding, as all I could do was to observe the child; and I have no confidence that this year's experience was helpful to learn from for other cases next year'.

In six of the seven schools visited, producing an IEP is the responsibility of the SEN-specialised staff the schools have recently hired, especially for students in the lower primary grades. Non-specialised teachers who claim they previously produced IEPs but who have recently been relieved of this responsibility are now resentful because they receive this gesture as a lack of recognition of their experience, thus negatively affecting their inter- relationships with staff.

- Staffing and Support:

DIEPF indicates that a school needs to hire a senior SEN-specialist for the post of Support Teacher(s) to guide and support teachers in their inclusion practices, in a minimum ratio of 1:200 students; and Learning Support Assistants (LSAs) to support the learning of students with disabilities in a minimum ratio of 1:125 students (KHDA, 2017a, p. 45).

However, all teachers in six schools in this study stated that the quality and frequency of guidance and support provided are either not adequate in quality, or insufficient in availability when needed to help them find solutions to the challenges they face. This applies both to Support Teachers and to LSAs: all seven schools had only 1-2 Support teachers per school, far less than the DIEPF required ratio; and LSAs were frequently underqualified or not trained for the task, which reflected negatively upon the subject teacher, although when otherwise well trained, are capable of making an important contribution in empowering learners with intellectual

disabilities (Gaad, 2015). A SEN-specialised teacher in one school summarised the situation thus:

> 'We need more quality, and less unqualified staff.'

As a result, a common complaint amongst these teachers is the heavy workload they are left with to handle on their own, which according to research findings, affects teachers' attitudes towards inclusion by demotivating them due to the added workload while their efforts are not recognized, a situation that literature records as occurring elsewhere as well (Avramidis, 2002).

The roles and responsibilities of each staff member are not clearly defined and communicated so that they may complement one another. As a result, 23 teachers reported that tasks are sometimes missed, especially between subject teachers and LSAs, where the roles of each are not consistently coordinated for the pull-out session of a student experiencing disability, which often creates tension in the relationships among school staff. Another phenomenon teachers reported in four schools is that the LSA is often the child's nanny and accompanies him/her to school and in class at all times: as nannies may often be under-qualified to provide the appropriate support to the student experiencing disability, teachers question whether she actually supports the child, or whether the nanny's presence is contributing to delaying the development of the student's independent learning skills.

- Regarding communication of information that is vital for effective teaching performance, participants reported gaps are common at different levels across various school operations in five schools, especially where the organizational structure of the school is a strict hierarchy. Teachers in five schools stated they wish they were allowed to participate in discussing matters related to their teaching, as this would make all teaching staff concerned with the same student better aware of the specific needs of the student and their teaching strategies and practices would be planned to maintain consistency. With untimely information received of their students with disabilities so that knowledge acquired is fragmented and contributes little to a feeling of self-efficacy. Also, as follow-up and feedback from middle-level

leadership staff is inconsistent, teachers were often uncertain which strategy to apply.

Information distribution even regarding DIEPF requirements and SIF standards is scant, although its criteria are used to judge teaching and learning; and even the final school rating, are among aspects of a school that most teachers knew very little about. Little is understood about the new inclusion-related posts in the school, which results in over-reliance on other staff members or under-estimation of staff member roles and is another cause for tension in their relations. Such relationships therefore raise questions regarding the nature and extent of collaboration amongst teachers in catering to the same students with disabilities; their awareness of the process of school self-evaluation report or the school improvement plans that are annually required to be submitted to KHDA, which would have presented good drilling exercises to plan their own teaching.

Such gaps in collaboration and communication create feelings of lack of appreciation of their potential contribution and have a negative influence on teachers' overall attitudes towards inclusion (Savolainen et al., 2012; Avramidis & Norwich, 2010).

- Teacher preparation and training: Only 28 percent of all teachers in this study hold a qualification of any level in SEN, as can be seen from Table (1) of Appendix (2), and as subject teachers, none have a qualification in inclusive pedagogy. Even teachers who have some experience with students with disabilities stated that they need on-going training on the new types of disabilities they receive every year. The kind of training that is usually offered by the school is usually too generic and 'does not tell you how to deal with the specific case at hand', with limited relevance to the cases they have in their classes, and therefore does not empower them with the skills they need that can lead to enhancing their self-confidence in their abilities in inclusion.

Moreover, training is untimely, delivered in the winter holiday, i.e., four months after the onset of the school year and their first encounter with the students with disabilities, with limited or no opportunities to participate in discussions with other

teachers to share their experience. Therefore, the stress due to inadequate quality and frequency of guidance and professional support, or the resources to produce desired outcomes do not enhance self-confidence in their abilities in inclusion, and teachers are uncertain whether their instruction well serves the student with disability. Teachers reported the main difficulties they face are in differentiated instruction, assessment of student progress, and disruptions to classroom management due to students with emotional and behavioural disturbances, similar to findings in low-income schools in the USA (Lerner, 2019).

-Staff inter-relationships: Among six schools in this study, teachers commonly stated that staff inter-relationships are often strained due to lack of clarity of roles, often under-qualified staff, and over-reliance on one another which impede developing mutual support and learning and a sense of 'collective efficacy' among teachers. Five teachers in three schools also stated they feel the teaching load is not fairly distributed.

In one MoE school, a staff member at middle-level leadership described the wide gap in knowledge between subject teachers and LSAs, of whom '70 per cent are under-qualified, because they are nannies hired by the parents'. Also conversely, when a LSA has been trained for her task, relationships are not as good as should be, because their respective roles are not clearly defined, thus between the two, some tasks get missed. Whether teachers in the same school have a sense of collective efficacy as defined by Bandura (1993, 1997) of

> 'a group's shared belief in the conjoint capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given levels of attainment'

is a needless question, as participants in five schools described their inter-staff relationships as cautious regarding questioning methods of instruction; while competition rather than collaboration, team-work, and mutual support were instances of individual teacher's choice, but not the norm. Teachers are therefore expected to be missing twice through such inter-relationships of staff: both in their individual self-efficacy, and in the collective efficacy of the team.

- Teacher accountability : In six schools, teachers are held accountable in their implementation of inclusion practices to a number of individuals at mid-level leadership who may have different understandings of inclusion, often causing clashes which leave teachers confused regarding what course to take with SEND students. Most teachers in three schools stated they have more trust in their own experience than in some of the instructions they get from leadership. However, this meant an added workload for them in seeking other sources of knowledge to be able to manage with the SEND student, but for which they expressed doubts whether their practices are the most beneficial for the student or not.

-Teacher's views of inclusive education:

a) **Pull-out practice**: In four of the seven schools, most teachers hold the view that students with disabilities learn better when in partial and temporary exclusion (pull-out), while also ensuring that teaching of non-disabled students is not being compromised. The same preferences of pull-out were the norm more than ten years back, as shown in a previous study in Dubai private schools (Gaad and Khan, 2007). In four schools in this study, pull-out is preferred by all teachers who lack a qualification or training in SEN, whether with or without teaching experience due to fear of the responsibility to meet the related challenges.This preference of partial exclusion of students experiencing disabilities for a fraction of school-time is shared with educationists in other countries (de Boer et al.,2010), where the majority of teachers in a review of 26 studies were found to hold neutral or negative attitudes towards the inclusion of pupils with special needs in regular primary education.

The UK schools in this study showed a different approach to implementing inclusion, where students with disabilities are in the mainstream class almost all the time and need to learn the same curriculum as their peers. This is enabled because the school policy requires categorising students of a class into 3-4-level abilities, so students with disabilities can fit in and be learning in 'a common learning environment' with their peers (KHDA, 2017a, p.53). A more common practice of student support is 'push-in', i.e., an LSA is brought into the class to support the

student with disability. However, the pedagogy used is still one of SEN rather than the inclusive pedagogy prescribed by DIEPF. Survey responses of participants in these UK schools were highly positive (91 percent) regarding teachers' views that students with disabilities learn better when in class with their peers, but in the interviews all expressed their wish for greater student support, especially in grade 5 and above, for which LSAs are not hired.

Unlike the other school types, teachers in these UK schools stated that the organized team-teaching and mutual class observation keep them well-informed about the learning of the students with disabilities, which serves as feedback about their teaching practices. One UK school even prioritises hiring teaching staff on the basis of passion and dedication to inclusion rather than on level of qualification.

b) Assessment of Student Progress was stated by teachers in five schools to be 'a major challenge' for about half the teachers in this study. This response was obtained in those schools where teachers stated there were inaccuracies in the identification of cases of disability; or where there was no clarity regarding learning targets to achieve, or how to measure their learning. Paradoxically, in three schools, teachers who expressed a high self-confidence in their ability to assess student learning and progress raise many questions regarding how such a judgement is made.

In three schools where provision is curriculum-centred rather than student-centred, most teachers stated they had instructions to be 'close' to the student, i.e., their empathetic approach to students was a priority so students can be motivated to learn. However, when asked how students' progress is measured, teachers commonly were unable to refer to specific criteria and tools to produce such evidence, and confirmed that student assessment was the second major difficulty they faced next to differentiated teaching. Therefore, teachers' self-judgement of a self-confidence in their abilities in inclusion through their empathetic approach appears to be a judgement of students' well-being, or social integration, but not to academic learning, which they confirmed they had difficulty to assess.

Nevertheless, although self-efficacy may not necessarily reflect the actual competences of an individual (Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998), it is the 'can do' attitude that can motivate a teacher to delve into other challenging tasks (Bandura, 1997).

Theme (5): Parents

Parents are a crucial player that impact the learning outcomes of their children, especially in the case of children experiencing disability (Bennett and Hay,2007). By engaging with the school in effectively practicing their parenting part of an IEP, they can significantly contribute to improved student learning outcomes; and by engaging in the learning activities of their child, indirectly motivate the teacher to carry on with her efforts with the student (ibid.).

In three schools, participants estimated that 40- 50 percent of parents are in denial when they first bring their children for admission at a new school. Parents are in denial often because of lack of knowledge about inclusive education services; or because they fear their child will be stigmatized and 'labeled' (Gaad, 2010; Alborno and Gaad, 2014) due to the special item in the student's report card that records the kind of special services the student received and is feared to forever label the student's identity. Teachers in four schools reported it may commonly take parents 2-3 months to give the school their approval to implement inclusion services, during which time the teacher would be working on a trial and error basis with no clear plan on what is best for the student. In addition, the quality and duration of an intervention applied with a student is a matter left to the school to decide: some teachers in this study hinted that the financial interest of a school would dictate carrying on with a prescribed intervention even when student outcomes show the student no longer needs it, which are situations that backfire on teacher motivation and attitude towards the inclusion practices in place. Questions are therefore raised with respect to budgeting; to priorities of educational issues in decision-making; and to extent of parent engagement in following up on their children's education, none of which serve a student's benefit or the support to teacher self-efficacy.

Other parents think that as they pay extra fees for inclusion services in a private school, teachers are entirely responsible for their child's 'success' and use this justification to relieve themselves from contributing positively to their child's learning, which is demotivating for a teacher. Persuading the parents to take on their complementing parent role in the IEP may take 2-3 months of efforts of persuasion. One SEN-specialised teacher reported:

> 'We tell them that if you do not work on it [their parenting part] in harmony with what we are doing, our efforts will be useless'.

Both leadership and teachers play a role in bringing the parents on board this effort, but the delays in issuing the IEP present another impediment to enhancing teacher self-efficacy, especially added to other inefficient procedures in school management; to hesitant parents who need guidance in fulfilling their parenting roles themselves; and the surrounding community culture that appears to be in need for further raising their awareness of embracing student diversity in school and society. Within such a context, even raising the question of teacher self-efficacy becomes pointless.

Theme (6). School Leadership

KHDA data indicate that during the ten years (2008-2018) schools showed a rise in the percentage of schools rated as 'good' or better in general overall improvement. However, MoE schools showed a striking drop in teaching and learning (KHDA, 2018) as can be seen in Table 2.1 in Chapter One, section 1.3 My assumption at the onset was therefore that most of the issues would be situated with teachers. However, results of five schools in this study show that from the teachers' perspective, the many issues that affected their self-efficacy negatively were due to leadership shortcomings, indicating a lack of awareness of research findings which confirm the importance of teacher self-efficacy in inclusion, and therefore factors that present adverse conditions are not addressed. The other two schools were in a transition of shifting over to inclusive education principles.

Following the above summary of the main themes that emerged from the data gathered, details of the data gathered are presented in Section 4.2.3 below.

4.3.3 **Details of Data for Research Questions (1-4)**

Part One: Interview and focus group results for research question (1), 'My understanding of inclusive education'.

The data gathered to answer research question (1) are arranged as follows, with interpretations throughout to elaborate on the results:

Part One: i) Coded quotes of participants in the interview and focus group meetings, in a table for each school type.

ii) – Survey responses in a table per school type, with a comparison to percentages from the interview and focus group responses, calculated from coded quotes in (i).

Part Two: Figure 4 provides a comparison of responses to Survey question (1) for respondents from all three school types.

a) MoE Schools

Table 4.3 below provides a quote per teacher interviewed in response to research question (1): My understanding of inclusive education.

Table 4.3. Coded quotes from interview and focus group responses of teachers in two MoE schools to research question (1)- 'My understanding of IE'.

MoE Schools	
Quotes from Interviews & Focus Groups- Q 1. **My understanding of inclusive education (IE)**	**Codes**
Linked to disabilities/ problems of children	Disability
Having all students with disabilities in the same class.	Integration; disability
Integrating SEND cases	Integration; disability
Education that involves students with disabilities who are admitted to mainstream schools; IE is also about social inclusion of students with SEND.	Disability; Integration
Those with disabilities	Disability
Giving opportunity to SEND students to be integrated in schools and other institutions in work, and in public life.	Integration; disability; social dev
Linked to disabilities and problems that children have.	disabilities
Integration of SEND students. These are students that may have lower than average intelligence, such as slow learners, who need to bring in reports of their condition.	Integration; disabilities; medical model
Integrating SEND students in the school and meet their needs through adaptation or modification of the subject matter.	Integration; disabilities; differentiated teaching
Socially the SEND child benefits, but they learn better in pull-out.	integration; disability; medical model

In the two MoE schools, teachers understand that 'disability' is mainly what IE is about, as can be seen from the quotes above. Their definition of 'disabled' are those students showing academic under-performance, and that maintaining an empathetic approach with them motivates them to learn. 'Social development' appears as the second choice, which most teachers explained as amounting to social integration, similarly to the common understanding of their home country (Alkhateeb et al., 2016), while the concept of 'catering for all', which is what the DIEPF calls for, is almost absent as a common notion.

Three teachers in MoE schools expressed their negative views regarding the presence of students with disabilities in mainstream schools:

1. 'I think the regular children are often negatively impacted by the presence of the SEND cases, especially in the higher grades.'
2. 'I personally think that the teacher who is not dedicated to teach such cases should not be forced to do so because they may impede student learning.'

3. ‘The other students become a source of constant disturbance and need counseling services, alongside the Action Plan for the SEND student.’

However, it should be noted that within schools of the same type, there were wide differences in the teachers’ understanding of IE, as can be seen in Table 4.5 below, which makes the calculated averages somewhat misleading, although they still show the same sequence of prioritised understandings. Curriculum is not the reason for the wide differences in understandings, since it is the same in both schools where a separate SEN pedagogy is used; rather, other factors relating to the specific context of each school appear to have a strong effect on how teachers perceive IE.

The same trend of inter-group school wide differences repeats itself across the three types of schools, such that the averages calculated for responses in the survey are often middle points between two extremes. Yet a comparison with the percentages of coded responses obtained in the interviews and focus group meetings shows that the same trend is also followed, in terms of which is the top-most choice, or the least choice of the participants within each school group, thus gives the findings a certain degree of credibility.

Table 4.4. Survey responses on teachers’ understanding of IE in 2 MoE schools, compared with average responses from interviews and focus group meetings.

MoE curriculum Schools				
Responses to Survey Q 1: My understanding of inclusive education	**School(1)**	**School(2)**	**Average responses for Survey**	**Average responses from Interview + Focus Group Meetings**
Disabilities (SEND)	63%	100%	**82%**	**100%**
Catering to all	25%	75%	**50%**	**10%**
Social Development	50%	75%	**63%**	**70%**

b) US Schools

Table 4.5 below provides a quote per teacher from teachers’ interviews in response to research question (1): My understanding of inclusive education.

Table 4.5. Coded quotes from interview and focus group meetingss in 3 US schools to research question (1)- 'My understanding of IE'.

US Schools	
Quotes from Interviews & Focus Groups Q 1. **My understanding of inclusive education**	**Codes**
The child is given the opportunity to face the challenges of tomorrow. We need to deal with the child in a close way. This applies not only to disabled but also talented students.	Social development; Empathetic approach; Cater to all
Inclusive education is giving a chance to every child to live his life because this is a right, like any other student.	rights-base to education
I believe there is no such thing as disabilities, but there are different abilities.	Cater to all
That the curriculum needs to be adapted as per the academic, emotional or other needs.	Differentiation
Differentiation in education of students of different abilities, especially SEND students. They are mixed together.	Differentiation; Social integration; disability; cater to all
…the child should be learning in line with his peers.	Social integration; basic right
Inclusion is about education for all in the least restrictive environment to accomplish its need: it's the environment where they can be most successful.	Cater to all; social development
The child does not have to learn as per my pace; it is the other way round, and I have to modify it according to the child's needs.	Differentiation; Cater to all; social model
I initially try to socially integrate the child in the class.	Social integration
I make the SEND student participate in group activities, give him responsibilities like making him perform the task of a group leader.	Social integration

Teachers' responses in Table 4.5 above show a wider scope of understanding of IE in US schools. But also within this group, Table 4.6 below shows the uneven knowledge and the extent of wide differences in teachers' understandings of IE within schools of the same group.

Table 4.6. Survey responses on teachers' understanding of IE within 3 US schools, compared with average responses from interviews and focus group meetings.

US Schools					
Responses to Survey to Q(1): **My understanding of inclusive education**	School(1)	School(2)	School(3)	**Average of Survey responses**	**Average of responses from Interview +Focus Group Meetings**
Disabilities (SEND)	18%	25%	70%	**38%**	**10%**
Catering to all	36%	**50%**	70%	**52%**	**60%**
Social Development	**82%**	25%	**100%**	**69%**	**60%**

School (1) shows that efforts to socially integrate SEND students appear to exceed by far the attention to students with SEND or to students of all abilities. This priority of focusing on the well-being of SEND students is shared with schools in many other countries that have a longer experience with inclusion, such as USA and Germany (Eurydice, 2004).

School(2) has taken the step to hire a SEN-specialised teacher, but the multitude of responsibilities assigned to her dissipate her efforts with students, as she also acts as a mediator between teachers and parents, leadership and students, but no attempt is made in the school to create an ethos of collegiality to ensure collaboration among staff. One interviewee in school (2) was outspoken and confident in her personally acquired knowledge in SEN, and stated she trusted her experience more than policies that serve 'external agendas', thus presenting a classic example of Bandura's learning experience through 'Mastery' (1997), which exceeds their trust in school instructions.

School (3) shows the greatest balance in selecting the three meanings of IE, indicating a more comprehensive understanding of the three descriptions of inclusion as adopted by the Dubai policy DIEPF (KHDA, 2017). Of ten respondents, seven are aware that IE is about catering to students of all abilities as a basic human right for all children. However, their understanding of the social aspect tilts more towards 'integration' than to 'social development', and overall, there is coherence with the responses in the survey.

This description falls in line with the characteristics provided in the school profile, and suggests that teaching staff are made aware of the school's accreditation self-study and are therefore aware of the holistic meaning of inclusion. Teachers stated that they are provided with ongoing guidance and support especially during the first two months of a school year, which enabled them to overcome the initial stress. In addition, this was found to be the only school that makes a point of developing the talents of students experiencing SEND in various areas of art and in utilizing art to enhance their learning.

c) UK Schools

Table 4.7 Coded quotes from interview responses of teachers in two UK schools to research question (1)- 'My understanding of IE'.

UK Schools	
Quotes from Interviews & Focus Groups- Q1.: **My understanding of Inclusive education**	**Codes**
To include each student.	Integration
Different categories of children classified according to their barriers.	Catering to all; social model
Everybody should get equal opportunity to learn, not only SEND students, also gifted & talented. All should be given equal chance to the curriculum.	Catering to all; basic right
Special students will be in the same school & will be treated in the same way.	Integration; basic right
Kids who are not regular are placed in the classroom and must be catered for like the others.	Integration; catering to all
How to cater to the needs of different abilities. Streamlining all students in the same classroom with different educational needs.	Integration; catering to all
Regardless of the nationality, culture, ethnicity, or the development of the child, he has to be and participate in a school so that he will be given an education as it is his right as a child.	basic right
All children of all abilities have equal rights to learn and should be involved. And they do not want to be separated or feel bad.	Integration; catering to all; basic right
We realize that children should accept one another, and we should be preparing them for the big world.	Social development
We want both parties to attach to one another. They are part of society, and we need to show them how we can work together. They work, play and learn together and make friends.	Social development

The majority of interviewees in the two UK schools explained that inclusion is implemented differently in their home countries: integration is the main principle, based on a wide recognition of the child's basic human right to an education, where the norm is to have students of diverse abilities together in the same class, and no pull- out practices. Five teachers, more than in any of the other schools visited, were aware of the need to develop independent learning for students who experience SEND as a preparation for their life after school.

Table 4.8 Percentages of Survey responses in 2 UK schools, compared with average responses from interview and focus groups on research question (1).

UK Schools				
Responses to Survey to Q(1): **My understanding of inclusive education**	School (1)	School (2)	**Average for UK schools**	**Responses from interviews and focus groups**
Disabilities	40%	25%	**33%**	**0%**
Catering to all	20%	63%	**42%**	**50%**
Social Development	100%	38%	**69%**	**70%**

However, Table 4.9 below provides some negative responses regarding overall inclusion practices in the UK schools, which identify areas for improvement:

Table 4.9. Negative responses regarding IE from five interviewees in 2 UK schools.

UK schools	
Negative Responses from Interviews & Focus Groups- Q1: **My Understanding of inclusive education**	**Codes**
It's very hard for the SEND students to work in groups or make friends, because they are labeled and most of the regular kids usually do not like to work with them because they are weak or slow. Also when they are pulled out from classes, I feel that regular kids know the reason: because they are weak.	Counselling role Integration; social stigma; student propensity for being judgemental; pull-out effectively a form of exclusion
In grade 1-2, they easily make friends. In upper grades it is more difficult.	social development and integration
When you have 28-30 students in a class, they all go crazy. It can last 5-10 minutes.	workload; large number of students per class; behavioural disturbance.
I would prefer not to have SEND students in my class: it means extra work; and the level achieved by the other students is lowered. When you are trying to multi- task teaching students with disabilities and regular kids, it's a waste of time for the regular kids.	workload; distribution of teacher's efforts; compromised student achievement; time management; need for teacher support
Regular students do not understand what can trigger a tantrum of a SEND student, so they sometimes avoid them	behavioural disturbance; stigma

Teachers explained that with older students, making friends is difficult because students of their school community are imbibed ideas of social stigma. Parents have not helped the student counselling efforts and consider their children to be 'free to choose who their friends are'. As a result, teachers need to improvise in getting all students to interact within their learning activities but are not certain how to tackle this added task to their already heavy workload. They are cautious not to compromise their efforts with the majority of students in the class as 'it's a waste of time' for these students, and as no LSAs are hired for grade three and above, teachers lack any support to achieve student learning.

In addition, they have just been introduced to the concept of differentiated teaching, for which the Head of Section for SEN has recently initiated training workshops.

These responses clarify the results shown in Table 4.8 below, namely that teachers' understanding of inclusion in UK schools is as follows:

a) Four teachers are aware that inclusion is a 'basic right' for all children;
b) Students with disabilities are only 'integrated', or accomodated in the mainstream school, but no special effort is made for enhancing their social development;
c) Participants are not aware that a UAE federal requirement is to focus on students with disabilities. They operate as in their home-country practices, since all students are 'together' in the same class, they should receive the same education.

4.3.3.2 Part Two: Comparison of Survey Responses from all schools to Research question (1): My understanding of inclusive education

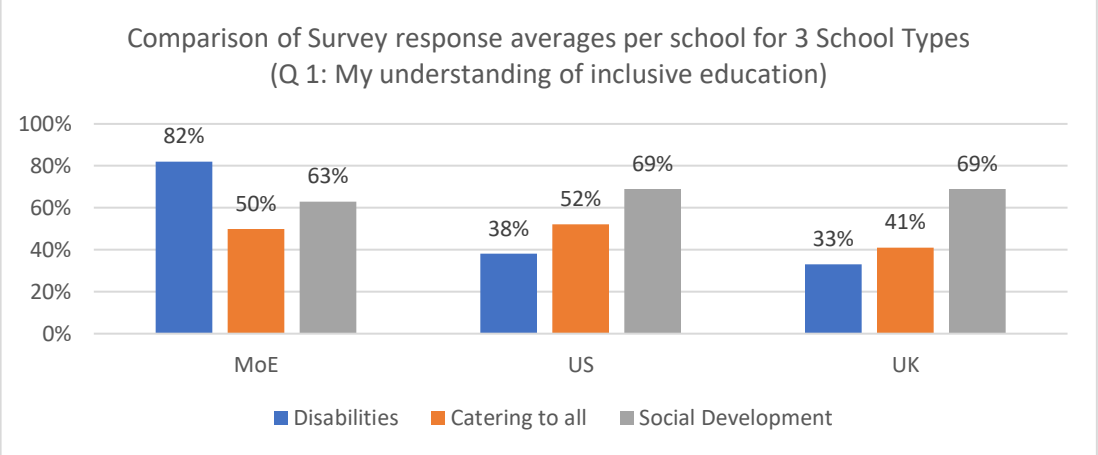

Figure 4. Averages of survey responses to research question (1) by school type.

Figure 4 Provides the averages of survey responses by school type for each of the three described areas of inclusion, showing the differences in teachers' understanding of what IE is about across the three types of schools. These averages conceal the wide differences that exist within each school type; however, the overall results can be summarized as follows:

- MoE schools: the general understanding is that inclusion is mainly about students with Disabilities (82%). Social development (63%).

- US and UK schools follow a similar pattern in their understanding, with social development being top (69%), followed by catering for students of all abilities, and least of all, focusing on students experiencing disabilities.
- US and UK schools follow a similar pattern of priorities given to descriptions of IE.
- Catering to students of all abilities is an area that warrants training in all types of schools, as the highest percentage obtained was only 52%.

Box 4. 2 ***Summary of responses to question(1): My understanding of inclusive education(IE).***

-Wide differences in understandings of IE across and within all schools, with differing definitions of terms, which entail different actions and arrangements.

- Most schools apply the outdated medical model of inclusion, which is not compatible with the philosophical approach of IE.

- Leadership shows various flaws resulting from failing to communicate to the teaching staff about DIEPF as a binding policy for private schools in Dubai; from failing to identify the educational objectives to achieve; as well as to define the terms used and the roles of various staff members.

4.3.4 **Layout of Data for Research Questions 2-4**

The layout of the data is in the following sequence for each research question:

Part One: Data from the interviews and focus groups, provided as one quote per participant by school type, in a table for each of the three school groups.

Part Two: Data from the survey, provided for all three school types in one table.

4.3.4.1 Research question (2): Policy enactment

Research Question (2): *What are teachers' views on how Inclusive Education is enacted in their low-performing schools*

Part One: Data from interviews and focus group meetings: Research Question (2)

a) MoE Schools

Table 4.10 Coded quotes from interviews and focus groups' responses to research question (2) in 2 MoE schools to: ***How are inclusion policies enacted?***

MoE Schools	
Interview and Focus Group Responses**:** Research question(2): **How are policies enacted?**	Code
What I know is that these indicators are used to evaluate subject teaching generally inside the classroom, but not for SEND students.	Ignorance of DIEPF
I read that on the website. They are high level but do not help in implementing in the classroom.	Policy insufficient to face classroom challenges
The school management did not discuss it with us.	Policy not discussed with staff
I am supposed to produce the same learning outcomes as with the regular children. But we are told that for SEND students, we need to diminish the content assigned for the assessment.	Differentiated teaching not understood
The worksheets I prepare and provide to the three SEND students in my class are my own work, as a result of my own research on what to do for each. But I am not sure if what I am doing is the right thing or not. Also, as I am alone in my class of grade 9, for which no LSA is provided to give support to the students, the load becomes too much, which undermines provision for all students in the class'.	Lack of teacher support & guidance; lack of feedback; load of work; reduced provision for 'regular' students.
It is a big load of added work as the teacher is not qualified or trained to deal with them [students with disabilities] *and is left on her own to research and prepare an action plan.*	load of work; lack of training; insufficient teacher support
My dealing with them is based mostly on a basis of empathy rather than on a professional basis. So I am not sure whether what I am doing is beneficial to them or maybe I am undermining their learning.	Empathetic approach is the basis for interaction; uncertainty in teaching practices; lack of guidance

- **Additional Responses from leadership in MoE schools**

A senior and a mid-level leadership staff provided additional input summarized below:

Vice Principal: A new joiner to the school, only three months prior to my school visit, noted the following:

> ´Actually the cases we have in this school are not children with medically identified impairments, but rather have special social conditions.'

His view was that social integration precedes objectives of learning: for the support to learning to be effective, these children need to be given affection and to establish a bond within a trusting relationship, and a readiness to learn and interact with the teacher. He gave the following description of the school upon arriving on board:

> 'The SEN-specialised Head of Section who used to give teachers guidance on inclusion quit one month after the school start in September, and is an example of the high teacher turnover of 48% in this school. None of the teaching staff hold a qualification in SEN, with reliance being on teachers with the longer teaching experience. Some have been nominally assigned the role of 'Support Teacher' as required by KHDA, although they are under-qualified. For measuring student learning, the school policy is to test the amount of student knowledge acquired with respect to the curriculum content, regardless of the kind of disability the student is experiencing. Students are first given the usual material at the level of their class, and depending on their response, a decision is made whether to go forward or backward, until they 'understand'.

Hence characteristics of this school include the following: a skewed understanding of disability, and inaccurate identification of cases; under-qualified staff in SEN; curriculum-centred pedagogy; ignorance regarding the identification of barriers to learning, and of the strategies to reduce these barriers; and lack of professional tools to assess student learning.

a) <u>The Head of Department (HoD) for SEN</u> in the other MoE school stated that for information about DIEPF:
   'Teachers can visit KHDA website and get informed on their own.'

However, when asked how teachers get to know what standards are used for inspecting inclusion provision, the response indicated that schools require teachers to abide primarily by the school policy rather than by DIEPF standards:

> 'They are informed through us and the HoD of the subject.'

The above contradictory responses came from the same individual at middle level leadership, in the post of 'Head of Section (HoS)': as a post that represents the hierarchical organization of the school, which is not typical of how an inclusive school is managed, DIEPF requires replacing it with an Inclusion Support Team (IST) consisting of the school principal, the Support Teacher(s) and the champion for inclusive education (KHDA, 2017a). This demonstrates that these schools have not made the structural changes to embed IE and still cling to a rigid hierarchy that

filters the regulations or policies it chooses to transmit to teaching staff. When asked about the frequency of meetings held for teachers of the same students with disabilities to share, discuss and plan practices, as a platform for a professional dialogue from which teachers can learn, the response from the HoS came as follows:

> 'We prefer to give our teachers guidance on SEND student issues in private; because of their ignorance it would be embarrassing for them to discuss in groups'.

The impact of this mentality on teachers is that they rely on judgements of their own abilities and draw from their lived experience of the cases they interacted with and are based on their individual understanding of what inclusion is about.

b) US Schools

One of the three US schools has hired a Support Teacher and a champion for inclusive education and together, appear to be joining efforts in making significant strides in IE. The other two schools are still farther behind: remarks of a SEN-specialised teacher in one of these two schools gave the following general description of her school:

> 'Subject teachers do not quite know or understand what SEN-specialised teachers do, and therefore they view SEN teachers with apprehension rather than with a collegiate attitude. Some subject teachers do not like or even want to be told what type of special strategy to use with a child with SEND, as they feel they are overloaded.
>
> There is no opportunity for a professional dialogue between the two types of teachers, and so there is detachment. Subject teachers feel left out as they are not consulted when the child's report card is written out. This is a lost opportunity for bringing in all teachers on the same page in learning about the child with SEND in their class. In addition it does not contribute to embracing a collegiate atmosphere among staff.
>
> Classroom or subject teachers may be experienced teachers but with no qualifications in SEN: by showing them teaching strategies and how to adapt resources to the needs of the child, that are different from the traditional methods, teachers feel empowered using that tool, their self confidence is enhanced, and likewise their motivation to teach similar cases of students with SEND.'

Table 4.11 below presents a coded quote per participant in these two US schools in response to research question (2) on how policies are enacted, and are

summarized as follows, indicating the absence of an effective role of the school leadership:

- DIEPF as a policy is either not communicated to teaching staff or is done superficially; teachers' understanding of DIEPF ranged from unclear to nil. Rather, teachers are required to comply with the school policies.
- SEN-specialist direct guidance and support to teachers, when available, is more helpful than knowledge about the policy and Inclusive Education Framework;
- Participants view the identification of students with disabilities to be generally inaccurate or missing; as a result, teachers are generally more trusting of their own experience and seek information on how to cater to the student on their own.
- Lack of collegial relationships amongst school staff in general due to lack of communication and definition of the roles of each.
- Teachers view the school's processes of follow-up on teacher performance as inadequate feedback.

Table 4.11. Coded quotes from interviews and focus groups' responses to research question (2) in 3 US schools: How are inclusion policies enacted?

US-curriculum Schools	
Interview and Focus Group Responses**:** Research question(2): **How are policies enacted?**	**Code**
I believe they rely on the reports produced on the child's performance the year before.	Inaccurate identification of disability cases; inadequate processes
Cases are identified at the beginning of the year by observing the child, especially as there would be no previous report or information on the child. There isn't any history of the child for me to refer to.	Inaccurate identification of disability cases; scant teacher support
The only information I was given was just an oral notification that there would be SEND cases in my class.	Inadequate processes; scant teacher support
I found that in 6-7 /10 cases my direct assessment of the condition of the child as per my experience is more accurate than that of the school.	Inaccurate identification of disability cases; scant teacher support
As a psychologist I can tell you that many students do not have cognitive problems, but may have become weak due to negligence in the early grades, But academic weakness can lead to learning difficulties.	Inaccurate identification of disability cases;

The majority of students are not cognitively impaired, yet to teach them we need the help of the SEND department. Although we receive very limited advice on our instruction, our assessment questions need first to be approved by the SEND department.	Inaccurate identification of disability cases; scant teacher support; accountability but no guidance
Actually the school has its own policies regarding inclusive education.	Non-alignment of school policies with DIEPF
We need to be involved so we know the ins and outs of everything: it's important. when you're involved, you embrace it more. It's different.	Dissatisfaction with structures & processes; lack of ownership of decision
To be frank it was not very clear on how to support the children on the basis of KHDA framework.	DIEPF Framework not clear
A workshop was held during just one hour where they went through the school plan aligned with KHDA framework on what needs to be done, but it was an optional workshop.	Ineffective communication of policy
To be honest I wouldn't say that I am familiar with KHDA framework, as [the Head of Section] *went through the school's referral process of the plan within about forty minutes.*	Ineffective communication of policy
The KHDA indicators are the same as those for the education of all children, such as whether the child participates in class.	Ignorance of what DIEPF is about
The DSIB indicators help to understand the desired level of performance; however, it is mostly the help of the HoD for SEND, and the LSA that provides the more hands-on guidance and support.*	Teacher direct support is more important than the indicators of the IE Framework
We had a workshop about the policies relating to SEND. It helped a lot to understand why they want to include all students in the classroom. Yes, very helpful.	Helpful 'Read to understand' stage of enacting the policy
My child is my responsibility and I have to cater to her learning needs. This is the priority in my view; not an external agenda.	Reliability on personally acquired knowledge
To my knowledge, teachers have not been briefed on these KHDA rubrics of inclusive education.	DIEPF not communicated to teachers

**DSIB: Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau at KHDA, responsible for organizing the private school inspections in Dubai.*

c) UK Schools

Table 4.12. Coded quotes from interview and focus groups' responses to research question (2) in 2 UK schools.

UK-curriculum Schools	
Interview and Focus Group Responses**:** Research question(2): **How are policies enacted?**	**Code**
We as class teachers judge the students according to our interaction with them: when we communicate with them, or in group activities, we judge how they react; their response; how they act. Then we categorise them into three levels, then we ask the SEND teacher to come and observe them. This takes about 1-2 months.	Delayed identification of cases; teachers assigned task for which they are not trained
It takes 2-3 months during the first term to produce an IEP. During that time before we have the IEP, we practice with the child the FS curriculum as per the previous year records.	Delayed identification of cases; insufficient specialised support for teachers
Prior to an inspection we get training on what to do or say, and what not to.	Gaps in communication of policies; Compliance instead of quality enhancement; Ineffective leadership
[Regarding school rating by the School Inspection teams] *The management and HoS know, but they are separate and distant from us as teachers. We do not even know how we were rated by DSIB.* [Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau at KHDA]	Policies & feedback not communicated to teachers; Strict hierarchy; top-down instructions; limited professional teacher-leadership interaction

These responses from the UK schools pointed out the length of time spent in identifying a SEND case, during which the subject teacher has no guidance on how to proceed with the student. This kind of situation was reported also across six of the seven schools visited.

To sum up, responses from the majority of participants indicate that school leadership has not effectively informed teaching staff about the DIEPF policy and have effectively communicated and discussed actions to perform in accordance with the policy. Likewise, gaps in communicating vital information to teachers deprive them from making use of the School Inspection recommendations, or form results of external assessments to improve their provision. Thus, the teachers' view is that due to leadership's deliberate concealing of information, teachers miss the

opportunity for planning their teaching along more professional standards that are more likely to lead to enhancing their self-efficacy.

Research question (2): Policy enactment.

Box 4.3: **Survey Questions 2.1-2.6 gather data on the following**:

Q 2.1: Teachers' views on the accuracy of identification of SEND cases.

Q 2.2- 2.5: Policy enactment relating to communicating; discussing; and planning for specific outcomes.

Q 2.6: Teachers' acceptance of inclusion, and preference of pull-out.

- Part Two: Data from Survey in responses to research question(2): Policy Enactment

Table 4.13. Survey responses from participants of all schools to questions in Cluster (I): Enacting inclusion-related policies.

Q	Cluster I- How are policies enacted relating to inclusive education (IE)?	MoE (n=12)			US (n=25)			UK (n=13)		
		Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
2.1	Cases of SEND are accurately identified in my school: this enables applying the right intervention	87%	7%	7%	77%	18%	5%	85 %	15%	0%
2.2	The policies and the standards of the IE Framework provide clear guidance to apply effective inclusive teaching	**67%**	13%	20%	77%	23%	0%	77 %	8%	8%
2.3	To apply the principles of IE, I had to change my teaching practices drastically	**100 %**	0%	0%	41%	18%	27%	77 %	8%	0%
2.4	The values & culture of IE are largely upheld in my school	87%	7%	7%	82%	5%	9%	77 %	15%	8%
2.5	For the IEP to be successful, all teachers of a student who experiences SEND need to collaborate in joint teaching efforts	87%	0%	13%	**100 %**	0%	0%	62 %	23%	15%
2.6	Students who experience SEND show better learning outcomes & progress when they are taught alongside their peers in a class	47%	**27%**	**27%**	86%	5%	5%	**92 %**	8%	0%

Table 4.13 shows a generally high percentage of 'agree' responses to most of the statements, diverging from responses in the interviews. Responses of 'neutral' and 'disagree' (hence, dissent) are sometimes more significant, as they indicate likely drawbacks. Below are interpretations of the results, taken by question.

Q 2.1: (*Cases of SEND are accurately identified*): Especially in MoE schools, the high percentage of 'Agree' responses (87%)regarding accuracy in identifying SEND cases diverges from responses in the interviews, suggesting teachers' likely apprehension of recording their critical view in written form; or probably because most of the students are not SEND cases, as one Vice Principal stated. While the School Inspection Reports made the following judgements of these schools:

> '…the processes the school has to identify students with specific learning disabilities are not sufficiently rigorous'.

In two US schools, interviewees stated that returning students had not been accurately identified to begin with, and as school staff relied more on the child's reports from previous years, this is likely to explain the relatively high percentage of 'neutral' and 'disagree' responses (18%+5%=23%).

Q 2.2: (*IE Framework provides clear guidance in inclusion*): MOE schools show the highest dissent (13%+20%=33%), followed by US schools (23%). The interviews generally showed that most participants know nothing/very little about the IE Framework, and that instead, teachers are accountable to school leadership instructions.

Q 2.3 (*Need to change my teaching practices drastically*): Unanimous 'agree' response in MoE schools indicates the respondents' previous teaching methods were not aligned with inclusive education. In US schools, 41% agreed, while those in dissent (18%+27%= 45%) stated in the interviews that the changes they did need to make were not drastic, but were mostly to adapt to the specific practices in their school, which was different from their previous experience in their home countries. Participants in UK schools had the same responses as those in the interviews, using familiar practices to those of their home countries.

Q 2.4 (*Values and culture of IE are upheld in my school*): A high rate of 'agree' across all schools; such a response may be justified if the respondents relate to 'social integration' as referred to in research question (1), which was indicated as one of the school priorities. Otherwise, the responses most likely relate to the specific understanding of IE in each school. The highest rate of dissent was in UK schools (15%+8%=23%), for which no explanation is available since the survey was conducted at the end of the encounter, and there was no way to investigate this result further.

Q. 2.5 (*Need for teacher collaboration in inclusion):* The unanimous 'agree' response in US schools is aligned with the interview responses, where initial examples of team-work were given. MoE schools follow (87%), but from the interview responses, the opposite is generally the case on the ground, and is more an expression of acknowledging the need to work together for inclusion to be effective, than a description of what actually exists. In MoE schools, as the role of LSA is not clearly defined, subject teachers translate the term collaboration to mean reliance on LSAs to accomplish student learning, with the result that some tasks get missed. The lower response (62%) in UK schools is likely a reflection of the home-country culture where teachers reported they work individually and joint efforts for cases of SEND is not the norm.

Q 2.6 (*Students who experience SEND show better learning outcomes & progress when they are taught alongside their peers in a class*): In MoE schools, more than half (27%+27%=54%) the respondents disagree, with interview responses showing an even greater confirmation of teachers' preference in four schools for partial exclusion practices such as pull-out. These responses confirm that in these schools, the outdated form of inclusion is practiced; hence it suggests more strongly that the response MoE teachers gave to Q (2.4) (that the values of IE are upheld in their schools) refers to values of the outdated form of inclusion rather than to inclusive education.

US and UK schools show a much higher rate of 'agree' responses: interviewees in US schools reported that the new cases of SEND admitted this year submitted

specialist reports that were accurate, unlike those in previous years. This suggests a greater parent tendency to seek reports from professional specialists, which is expected to enable schools to produce more pertinent IEPs for the students. The very high percentage of 'agree' responses is a reflection of the norm of a common learning environment in UK schools.

Figure 5 below is a graphic presentation of the total data in Table 4.13, summarizing the survey responses of 'Agree' to the statements given in survey questions (2.1-2.6)to research question (2) by school type.

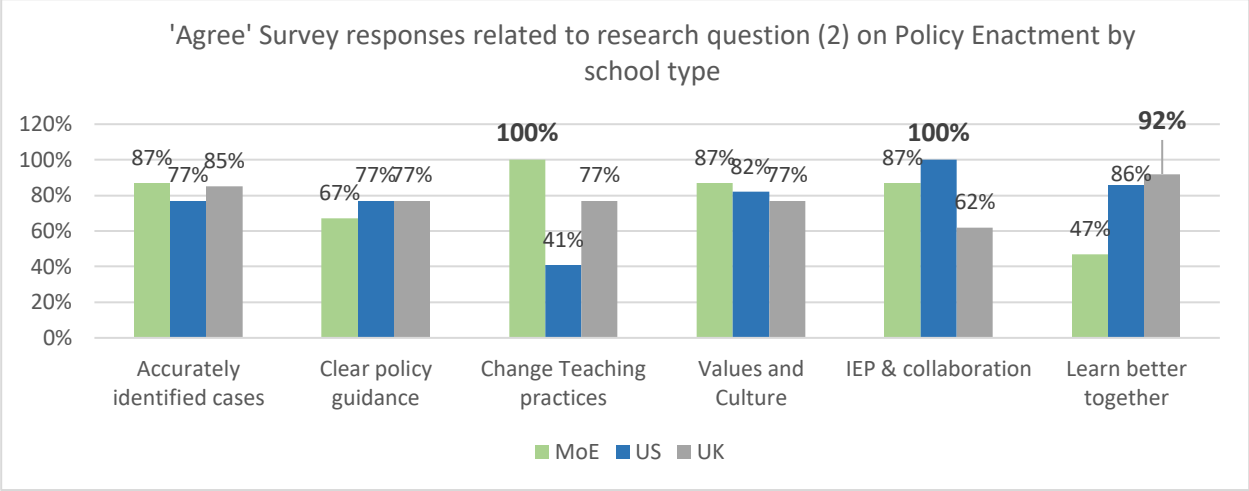

Figure 5. Total survey responses of 'Agree' to statements relating to research question (2): Teachers' views on how inclusive education policies are enacted, by school type.

Box 4.4: **Summary of survey responses to questions 2.1-2.6**:

- Common inaccuracies in the identification of SEND students;
- Limited or lack of knowledge of DIEPF requirements; hence responses would generally relate to the internal school policies;
- Responses indirectly indicate the preference of teachers' views on pull-out practice, and their general attitude towards a task they are not very confident to perform.
- Generally inflated teacher responses from MoE schools suggest their apprehension, and the incoherence of views makes them unrealistic.

4.3.4.2 Research question (3): My Abilities

How confident do teachers feel they possess the abilities to cater to the learning needs of students with disabilities?

Part One: Quotes from Interviews and Focus Group Meetings to answer research question 3.

Tables 4.14 to 4.17 below show the main quotes of teachers' perceptions of their abilities obtained from interviews and focus group meetings, classified in each table by topic of each sub-question 3.4-3.7, for easier comparison with the corresponding survey responses for the same research question 3, presented in Part Two, table 4.19.

Table 4.14. Coded quotes from interview and focus group responses in all schools to research question (3.4): Assessing the progress of students.

MoE - curriculum Schools	
Interview and Focus Group Responses Q 3.4) **Assessing the progress of students**	**Codes**
I reduce the content of the curriculum. This is what the HoD taught us and we carry on in this way.	Misconception of differentiated teaching; Adaptation of curriculum
I try to simplify the content to achieve the objectives in a simplified manner. I am not specialized in inclusive education, but I create the IEP.	Qualification for producing an IEP; Misconception of differentiation
Personal experience based on trial and error teaches one practices that are known today to be based on professional knowledge.	Learning by trial and error; Mastery through positive experience
The assessment questions are the same for all students, but we only write for him if he cannot write, or read for him if he cannot read.	Misconception of student support
US- curriculum Schools	
This is a very challenging point. It depends what they learned; what they should be learning. It's happening but is not clear. A progress report is produced, but the pathway to go ahead is not clear.	Lack of clarity of learning targets for SEND students; hence also validity of tools for assessment
We are given a prepared IEP from the IE Committee, but when it comes to differentiation we do not always know how to go about that.	Lack of clarity on what differentiation means and how implemented
If the number of students would be reduced to 18 instead of 24, I would have more time to allocate to all the students in the classroom.	Teacher work-load; Insufficient student support
UK- curriculum Schools	
SEND students do not participate in external assessments like CAT4. For our internal assessments, I make those questions for the SEND cases. Previously I would make easy questions so they can pass, but now I know that I should focus more on	Categorisation of students by levels Planning teaching

giving questions requiring retrieving of information rather than on inference.	Identifying cognitive objectives for student learning

Teachers in the US and UK schools do not participate in producing an IEP, but the system in place in the UK schools uses the results of CAT4 assessment to categorise all student abilities into three levels, and teaching is planned accordingly. Students with disabilities are excluded from taking any external assessment, and are placed with the category of lowest performers, according to which the IEP is then planned. Hence in these schools, teachers have the advantage of being provided with a tool to measure student learning and to plan their teaching.

(Q 3.5) **My teaching practices produce better outcomes with students with SEND**.

Very high rate of 'agree' responses in MoE (93%) and US (96%) schools and were equally confirmed in the interviews.

However, the below interview responses summarise on what basis such judgements were made in each school type:

Table 4.15 Coded quotes from interview and focus group responses in all schools to research question (3.5): My teaching practices produce better outcomes with SEND students.

MoE - curriculum Schools	
Interview and Focus Group Responses Q 3.5 **My teaching practices produce better outcomes with students with SEND**	**Codes**
Accomplishment with a child is a result of personal and emotional care: you need to create a bond of trust.	Empathetic approach precedes learning
Our schedule as LSAs in this school is to give the students with SEND two push-in and one pull-out session per week. I find that pull-out in the resource room is more beneficial for the students because when in class, they get more distracted during the lesson.	Student support as per medical model Benefit of quiet in resource room Distraction when in class
US - curriculum Schools	
I know because of their growth in information and from the questions they ask about in Science. Also because of their work, how more independent they become; how more confident they are to ask me things.	Criteria for judging cognitive development Confidence to inquire
UK - curriculum Schools	
When I discovered that he learns through visionary means, and in my lesson plans I included visual means, he progressed.	Use of resources to enhance learning
With time, I got to learn how to communicate with them, which is essential so you can teach effectively	Interacting using effective communication

(Q 3.6) **My motivation to teach students with disabilities is enhanced when they show progress in their learning.**

Teachers unanimously stated in all schools their acknowledgement that education is a human right. However, their evasive responses showed uncertainty in how to measure student progress and learning, which could otherwise motivate them to innovate further in teaching and contribute to enhancing their self-efficacy.

Table 4.16 Coded quotes from Interviews in all school types to Q (3.6): My motivation to teach SEND students is enhanced when they show progress in their learning.

MoE- curriculum Schools	
Interview and Focus Group Responses Q 3.6 **My motivation to teach students with disabilities is enhanced when they show progress in their learning**	**Codes**
What motivates me is the human side of my role as a teacher.	Inclusion as a basic human right
I personally believe that a teacher who is not dedicated to teach such cases should not be forced to do so because they may impede student learning.	Negative attitude; Importance of knowledge of adequate teaching practices
In principle teachers may accept SEND children, but not in practice, because they feel underpaid for their service or not appreciated for the additional efforts they make.	Underlying negative teacher attitude; Workload not appreciated; Underpaid
When I feel the child has developed and grown, it is very satisfying. He is also more independent as a learner and can make some decisions.	Satisfaction of student outcomes; Development as an independent person
US-curriculum Schools	
It depends whether the teacher wants to learn and adapt or not. Those who are motivated view these cases as a challenge from which to learn and develop their skills, or even from a humane point of view.	Teacher's personal traits; Inclusion as a basic human right
In general I can feel a child has made progress but I need the tool to measure	Judgement not based on evidence; Absence of criteria & standards to measure against
Assessment … is a very challenging point. A progress report is produced, but the pathway to go ahead is not clear	Objectives and targets to achieve not clearly defined
UK-curriculum Schools	
At the beginning I would rate my confidence as 4/10. But when I get to know the child, it's like using new tactics could work because each child is different. I had to go online to know what to do	Teacher's personal traits; Innovation in teaching
If I were given the choice, I would honestly prefer not to have SEND students in my class next year because of the extra work; and the level achived by the other students gets lowered	Demotivation due to: Extra workload, Fear of repercussions due to compromised achievements of other students in the class
I find it challenging and every day I am learning. I think wherever you go, you will find students who need help	Positive motivation due to personal interest; Diversity of disabilities is universal
Now I know that I should not give them too many inference questions, but rather focus more on questions requiring retrieving information	Curriculum modification Adaptation of assessments

(Q 3.7). **Capability to motivate students with disabilities to learn independently:** Respondents to the survey question in all schools almost unanimously 'agreed' to this capability. However, often the Learning Support Assistant (LSA) is not trained for her specific role to support the student and in promoting self-reliance in learning as a prioritized objective; while in other schools, independent learning is stated as one of the objectives of learning.

In one of the MoE schools, a subject teacher with training and experience in inclusion stated the following: for some cases of a student with SEND, they are constantly accompanied by an adult whose role is to monitor the student's distraction or hyperactivity so he does not harm himself or others in addition to the subject teacher and the LSA who is in class twice a week, i.e., a total of three adults in the classroom, two of whom cater to his/her personal needs. This raises many questions: do these two adults collaborate between them in complementing roles to train the child to learn independently? Isn't the presence of two adults in addition to the teacher catering to one student a form of indirect discrimination? To what extent is the content of the learning material modified such that it engages the student? How does the presence of three adults together affect the other students in the class?

Below are examples of responses from the interviews:

Table 4.17 Coded quotes from Interviews in all school types to Q (3.7): My capability to motivate students with disabilities to learn independently.

MoE- curriculum Schools	
Interview and Focus Group Responses Q 3.7 **My capability to motivate SEND students to learn independently**	**Codes**
I had a student who was initially unable to speak. She received intense care in the resource room, and eventually when she gained self confidence, was able to be relieved from special support.	Pull-out practice Empathetic approach
The emotional aspect plays a crucial role in the relationship with these kids, not only the professional specialization aspect.	Empathetic approach
US- curriculum Schools	
I am very motivated to teach them. I give them visual aids, like videos and extra information, and gradually challenge them. Then they become more independent and motivated to ask any question.	Uses resources to motivate students
If the child is initially totally dependent on you, then you want to make them independent. I tell them I'm here to help you, but you have to come up with the answers.	Gives instructions
We need to read to them so they understand. By coming up with their answers they become more confident and maybe with time they can read on their own.	Works on building student confidence
The LSAs aren't trained or making the child work independently; they don't have the knowledge to do so.	underqualified support for student
His nanny is his shadow teacher since KG. But he hasn't been officially diagnosed with anything, and she is not trained as a LSA, as she's been doing a lot of things for him. When the nanny was with him his marks were very high; on his own his marks became very low.	Under-qualified LSA nurtures student dependence
UK- curriculum Schools	
I need to get the student out of the support mentality. I know from my experience that 60% of students can make it.	Effort to transform student mentality of being dependent
I will support him and explain to him when needed. But the child needs to realize he cannot succeed if everything is modified or made easier.	Challenges student

We require the LSAs to gradually distance themselves from the child for some time, so they practice to depend on themselves. In the less severe cases, 50% of students make progress, and in the more severe cases, only 15-20% become more independent in their learning.	Strategy of gradual distancing to encourage independent learning

Part Two: Survey responses to research question (3): My Abilities

Box 4.5: ***Survey Questions 3.1-3.7 relate to the following***

Q 3.1: A teacher's self-evaluation to cater to all abilities.

Q 3.2- 3.4: Refer to abilities acquired through relevant training in IE.

Q 3.5- 3.6: Teacher self-evaluation of student outcomes as a result of their teaching practices.

Q 3.7 Reciprocal effect of outcomes on teacher motivation.

Table 4.18. Survey responses from participants of all schools relating to research question (3): My Abilities.

		MoE (n=12)			US (n=25)			UK (n=13)		
Q	My Abilities	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
3.1	I am able to teach effectively all students in a class even if they have diverse abilities	93%	0%	7%	91%	0%	5%	69%	15%	0%
3.2	Planning the IEP: I feel confident in my knowledge & skills to adapt the curriculum as per the needs and abilities of students	87%	13%	7%	86%	0%	0%	62%	15%	8%
3.3	I think I have the right knowledge & skills to implement effectively an IEP	93%	7%	0%	77%	14%	0%	69%	15%	8%
3.4	I have difficulty in assessing the learning of SEND students & in tracking their progress	**47%**	13%	**40%**	18%	14%	**64%**	23%	8%	**62%**
3.5	My teaching practices in IE are producing better outcomes with students with SEND	93%	0%	7%	**96%**	0%	0%	85%	8%	0%
3.6	I am capable of motivating SEND students to learn with self -reliance & Self-regulation.	93%	7%	0%	91%	5%	0%	**92%**	8%	0%
3.7	My motivation to teach SEND students is enhanced when they show progress in their learning	93%	0%	7%	86%	5%	5%	85%	0%	8%

4.3.4.3 Overall responses for research question (3)

a) MoE Schools

For almost all statements, teachers in MoE schools show the highest percentage of 'Agree' response, followed by US schools close behind. This suggests that the highly positive responses for most of the questions in Table (4.18) above are unrealistic, especially as several interviewees reported that the students they have in their classes are not accurately identified and may only be in need of a temporary intervention applied within an empathetic approach rather than a longer-term IEP. But as teachers in MoE and two US schools stated that learning is measured as the *amount* of knowledge that students with disabilities retain from the curriculum, rather than the intervention applied being planned to overcome any weakness they had, it is questionable what learning actually means in these schools.

Survey and interview responses in these schools are aligned, but linking these to their understanding of what inclusion is about, shows that their judgements relate to the outdated version of inclusion rather than to IE.

Given that self-judgements do not necessarily indicate actual competences (Tschannen-Moran et al. 1998),they are likely to be a measure of the effort they make in applying their teaching strategies, but they are not based on measurable evidence that relate to student learning outcomes. Nevertheless, the judgements mean they feel strongly about their abilities regardless of what these actually are, which is a helpful attitude and serves as a solid foundation to build upon forward through needs-based training.

Contradictions can be seen in responses of teachers in MoE schools: since almost half the teachers (47%) stated they have difficulty assessing the learning of students with disabilities(Q. 3.4), then it is questionable how they highly judged their abilities to effectively teach all students, and to plan and implement an IEP(Q 3.2, and 3.3)? Such responses suggest that teachers focus on the social integration of the students more than the kind of learning that takes place.

Responses to the two closely linked questions Q 3.1 (effectively teach all students) and Q 3.4 (difficulty in assessing SEND students) show greater alignment in US and UK schools.

b) US Schools: Questions (3.4 and 3.5) are closely linked together, and teachers' responses in this school type make sense: in general if teachers have no difficulty in assessing student learning (64%), they can safely judge whether their teaching practices are producing better outcomes (95%).

c) UK Schools: Teachers in these schools show a closely similar result as their peers in US schools for Q (3.4 and 3.5); more moderate judgement of their abilities to plan and implement an IEP and to assess students (Q 3.2- Q 3.4), and is reflected equally in the interviews. However, self- judgements of their abilities to interact with students are more positive (Q 3.5-Q3.7), most of all in learning with self-reliance, which is a comparative strength of these schools as they have very few LSAs, or due to the close monitoring of teaching practices by SEN-specialised middle-level leadership.

Box 4.5 Summary of survey responses to questions 3.1-3.7:

- Teachers in MoE schools relate their self-judgements of their abilities to inclusion rather than inclusive education, thus seem skewed as they are based on a misconception of terms, e.g., disability.
- Inaccuracies in identifying SEND cases are followed by a series of actions based on a philosophy and pedagogy different from the those of IE.
- Leadership appears to apply only superficial requirements of DIEPF, while failing to provide opportunities and platforms to enable teacher learning about IE.

4.3.5 **Layout of data for research question (4)**

What factors enhance/reduce teacher self-efficacy in their experience in inclusive education in Dubai?

Box 4.6 ***Questions 4.1-4.4 aim to gather data on the following:***

Q 4.1: Extent of exposure of teachers to exercises of self-evaluation and decision-making.
Q 4.2-4.4: Effect of some leadership practices on teacher learning about IE.

Data on factors that respond to this question are provided here only from the survey, as they have been covered by the interviews throughout responses to all preceding questions.

Table 4.19. Survey responses from participants in all schools relating to research question (4):Factors linked to leadership that affect my self-efficacy in inclusive education.

Q	Research Q 4: FACTORS affecting my SELF-EFFICACY in Inclusion	MoE Schools (n=12)			US Schools (n=25)			UK Schools (n=13)		
		Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
4.1	My participation in Self-evaluation report & decision-making regarding teaching strategies has enabled me to reflect on my teaching practices and to adopt inclusive teaching practices.	67%	13%	7%	86%	5%	9%	85%	7%	0
4.2	School leadership support is essential in providing SEN-specialised and support staff	67%	20%	13%	**91%**	5%	5%	85%	7%	0
4.3	School leadership provides the time & space for teachers to discuss their practices, so we can learn from one another	80%	7%	13%	68%	18%	14%	**92%**	7%	0
4.4	I feel that my school is a 'professional learning institution' where teachers learn from one another	**93%**	0%	7%	73%	9%	9%	77%	15%	7%

Box 4.7 ***Summary of survey responses to Questions 4.1-4.4****:*

Teachers in MoE schools commonly showed divergence in survey responses from those of the interviews;
Variance in responses of the three school types on the effect of leadership practices on teacher learning about IE.

Questions (4.1-4.4) relate to leadership actions and support.

a)MoE Schools: For questions (4.1 and 4.2), a relatively high percentage of dissent may be explained as follows:

(Q 4.1): Teachers seldom participate in decision-making regarding their teaching practices.

(Q4.2): Their dissent regarding the presence of SEN-specialised and support staff are essential is confirmed by the interviews where they conceded that most of the students they had are not really cases of disability. However, a high percentage agreed that they have opportunity for discussions (Q4.3 and 4.4), contradicting what came through in the interviews, which probably means teachers in these schools are overly cautious when expressing their views in written form. Especially striking is the high percentage of 'agree' (93%) that the school is a learning institution

(Q 4.4) which contradicts their comparatively low response (63%) for question (4.1) and would need further research to explain such discrepancies.

b)US Schools: The largest percentage (18%+14%=32%) of teachers expressing dissent was about the opportunity to discuss and learn from other teachers (Q 4.3); while they agreed about the importance of having SEN-specialised staff in the school. Both responses are aligned with what came through in the interviews. Question 4.4 showed the largest percentage of dissent regarding their school being a 'learning institution' (9%+9%=18%) and is equaled in UK schools (15%+7%=22%), indicating their need for more opportunities to be made available for them to learn from one another.

c)UK Schools: The highest percentage (92%) of 'agree' response was for (Q 4.3) regarding the opportunity to discuss and learn from other teachers. This response is aligned with those in the interviews, examples of which are:

> Teacher (1): 'I invite my colleagues to observe me in class. That is how we all learn by discussing.'
> Teacher (2): 'Also by team-teaching, or observing other teachers, say for about 3 periods per week.'

Box 4.8 ***Questions 4.5-4.10 relate to the following***:

- Teacher stress caused by the presence of SEND students, as an indicator of knowledge in pedagogy and competence in class management;
- Teacher learning experiences (according to Bandura): relationship with leadership, opportunities to observe other teachers; or whether to rely mostly on trial and error looking for a solution;
- Reciprocal effect of student outcomes on teachers' higher expectations of student achievement;
- Competition or collaboration in relationships amongst staff?

Table 4.20. Survey responses from all participants relating to research question (4): Factors that affect my self-efficacy in inclusive education.

Q	Research Q 4: FACTORS affecting my SELF-EFFICACY in inclusive education	MoE Schools (n=12)			US Schools (n=25)			UK Schools (n=13)		
		Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
4.5	Having students with disabilities in my class is stressful because they disrupt class management/increase my load of work/slow the progress of other students	**20%**	0%	60%	9%	18%	41%	7%	15%	54%
4.6	Feedback from leadership on my performance in IE is essential to encourage my innovating in teaching practices for students with disabilities (*'Verbal'*)	87%	13%	0%	82%	9%	0%	85%	7%	0
4.7	I can best learn how to implement a new teaching practice by observing an experienced teacher performing in class.(*'Vicarious*')	67%	0%	7%	77%	9%	5%	**92%**	0%	0
4.8	Trying out a new teaching practice is my preferred way of learning about its effectiveness in teaching students with disabilities *('Mastery')*	**93%**	0%	7%	86%	5%	0%	85%	7%	0
4.9	Practices of IE have enabled to raise my expectations of the learning of students with disabilities	93%	0%	7%	**91%**	0%	0%	77%	7%	0
4.10	Interacting with teachers from other schools regarding SEND is more effective than in-school teacher collaboration	67%	7%	13%	64%	18%	9%	54%	23%	7%

Highlights of the results are the following:

a)MoE Schools: Amongst the teachers in MoE schools visited in this study, (20%) feel stressed by the presence of SEND students in their class, which is a higher percentage than teachers in US and UK schools; however, other teachers in MoE schools also showed the highest percentage (60%) who disagreed. The latter response may either be because of apprehension, or because the cases they had were mild, as most admitted.

Question 4.8 has the highest percentage (93%) of 'agree' responses, which confirms their responses in the interviews as a result of their 'trial and error' strategy.

b) US Schools: Question 4.9. has a high percentage of 'agree' (91%) responses indicating that teachers have changed their attitudes and expectations of what the SEND students are capable of achieving; likewise in MoE schools (93%).

c)UK Schools: Question 4.7 had the highest percentage (92%) indicating teachers in UK schools learn best by observing other teachers perform, which is equally confirmed in their interview responses.

Box 4.9 Summary of responses to research question 4.5-4.10

- Teacher attitudes towards SEND students in MoE schools were more negative than in other schools;
- The preferred ways for teachers to acquire a learning experience about IE are through observing other teachers perform (UK schools), and through their own implementation (MoE schools).
- Such responses indicate what learning experiences are made available in each school type;
- Interaction with teachers in the same school is less than with other schools: this is a lost opportunity for creating a collective efficacy of teaching staff in the same school.

The fifth and last research question is about creating a synthesis of all the findings in this study. To answer this research question is to elaborate on the findings and to lead to the conclusions, and will thus be presented in Chapter 5, on Interpretation of Results and Conclusions.

4.4 The Pareto Chart

As explained in section 3.6.1, the Pareto Chart is a useful rule when planning for improvement amid a multitude of negative effects that reduce the quality of the outcome. In this study, amid the many factors impacting teacher self-efficacy, the Pareto Chart serves to verify where to prioritise an improvement plan to speed up improvement of all the drawbacks identified (Law, 2016).

The data in Table 4.22 below were obtained by making a list of the practices and factors affecting teacher self-efficacy negatively, as they appeared throughout the interviews, focus groups and survey from all participants; and by counting the

number of times each factor came up. These factors, or 'drawbacks' were mounted on an excel sheet and arranged in descending order of number of times each drawback was mentioned. The cumulative count is the sequence of counts of the numbers; and the cumulative percentage is a running total of the percentage values occurring across the whole set of responses.

Table 4.21 Total drawbacks in inclusion practices reported by participants through the interviews, focus group meetings, and the survey.

	Drawbacks in Inclusion Practices	No. of Drawbacks	Cumulative Count	Cumulative Percentage
1	Teacher training inadequate in quality, frequency, and timing	26	26	8.8%
2	Negative teacher attitude due to ignorance	18	44	14.9%
3	Teachers' view of students with disabilities: an added load of work	14	58	19.6%
4	School sections not cohesive in their IE efforts	14	72	24.3%
5	Understaffing of SEN-specialised staff	13	85	28.7%
6	Uncertainty how to differentiate teaching	13	98	33.1%
7	LSA support: underqualified, and insufficient frequency	13	111	37.5%
8	Parent ignorance and weak cooperation with teachers	13	124	41.9%
9	Gaps in communication to teaching staff	12	136	45.9%
10	Lack of clarity on roles of staff; few examples of coordination of teaching strategies	12	148	50.0%
11	Limited on-going teacher support and guidance	11	159	53.7%
12	Weak awareness of KHDA policies	10	169	57.1%
13	Leadership hold outdated understandings of IE	10	179	60.5%
14	Teachers' identified need for constant coaching & discussions	10	189	63.9%
15	Lack of clear tools to assess learning of SEND students	9	198	66.9%
16	Belated IEPs handed to teachers	9	207	69.9%
17	Tensions and non-collegiate teacher relationships	9	216	73.0%
18	Lack of clarity of teaching goals to achieve	7	223	75.3%

19	Inaccurate identification of SEND cases	7	230	77.7%
20	Uncertainty how to draw an Action Plan	7	237	80.1%
21	Teachers' bigger trust in personal experience than SEN reports	7	244	82.4%
22	Teacher-student relationship empathetic rather than professional	7	251	84.8%
23	Parents' negative attitudes towards disability	7	258	87.2%
24	Parent denial of their children's disability	6	264	89.2%
25	Type of student disability often not communicated to teachers	6	270	91.2%
26	IEP drawn is not discussed with teaching staff	6	276	93.2%
27	Teachers view IE as compromising learning of regular students	6	282	95.3%
28	Regular students in mainstream classes are another challenge	5	287	97.0%
29	Teacher efforts are under-appreciated by parents and school	5	292	98.6%
30	Limited school resources for effective IE	4	296	100.0%
	Total	**296**		
	Percentage	**100%**		

With the help of a formula on excel, the figures in Table 4.22 produced the Pareto chart in Figure 6 below.

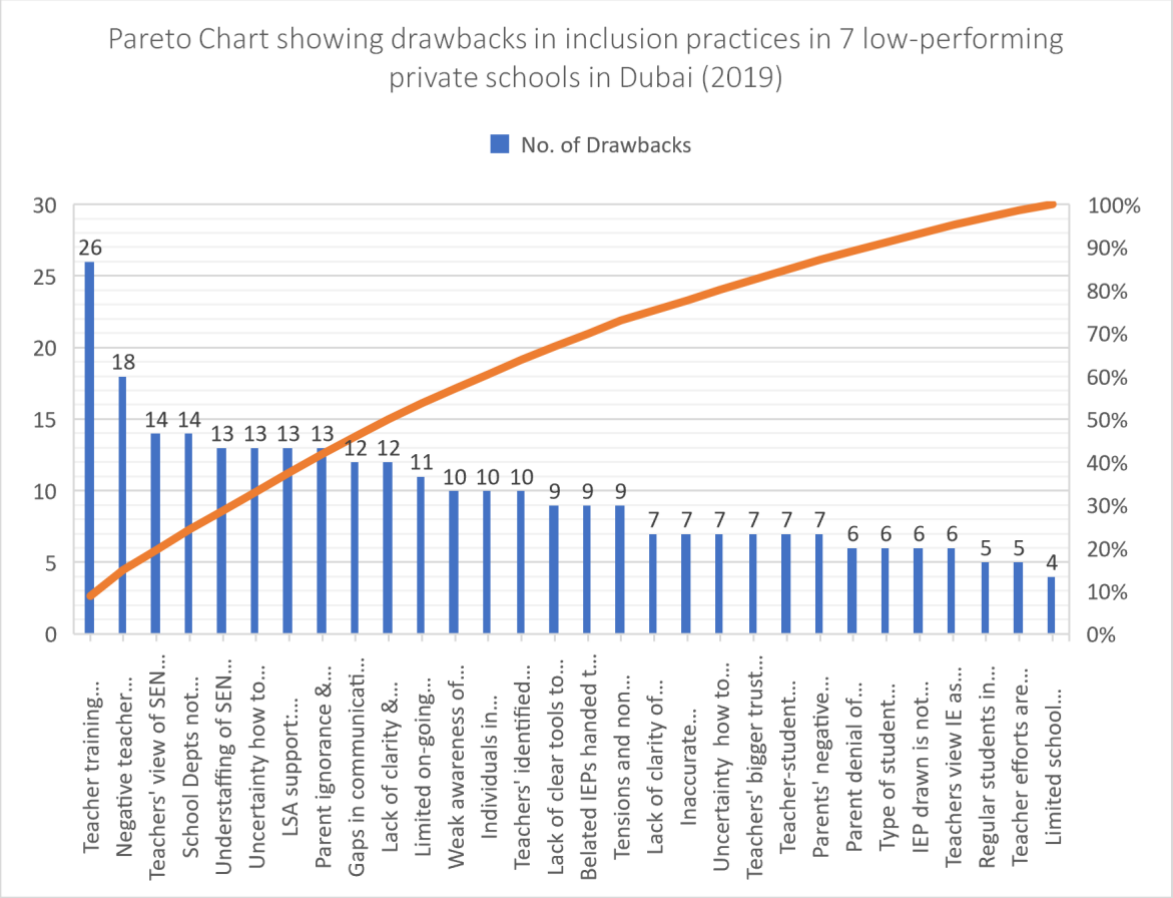

Figure 6. Pareto Chart showing the main drawbacks in inclusion practices of the 7 private schools in this study in Dubai 2019.

Figure 6, based on the Pareto Principle, is also known as the 80/20 Rule, which states that 80% of consequences are generated from 20% of the causes (the 'vital few', as distinguished from the 'trivial many'); hence, focusing efforts on 20% of factors can bring about an output affecting 80% of factors. The horizontal lines in the chart drawn from each cumulative percentage of defects (indicated on the right-hand y-axis), or their frequency distribution, meet the curved cumulative line in the chart at different points: those few but top drawbacks to the left of the curved line indicate the top factors on which work needs to be focused. The three topmost drawbacks in the chart relate to teacher training, their negative attitudes and their ignorance regarding inclusion and disabilities. Addressing these factors relies on leadership efforts in focusing on these areas, which can potentially diminish the remaining drawbacks as well.

However, the fact that the curved cumulative line is not steep indicates that each successive drawback contributes almost equally to the problem, which presents difficulty in planning improvement. Since a large number of these drawbacks are outcomes of one major factor, namely leadership practices (or lack of), then for a simple presentation of results, the drawbacks listed in Table 5.1 may be coded and regrouped under three headings, to distinguish each drawback in terms of where its responsibility lies. These headings are leadership, (cells in pale grey shade); teachers; and parents, thus giving the following results:

Table 4.22 Total drawbacks in inclusion practices regrouped by relationship to school leadership, teachers, and parents.

Drawbacks relating to:	**No. Drawbacks**	**Percentage**	**Cumulative Percentage**
Leadership	208	70.3%	70.3%
Teachers	57	19.2%	89.5%
Parents	31	10.5%	100%
	296	100.0%	

A simplified Pareto chart is thus produced in Figure 7 from the data in Table 5.2 and clearly shows that more than 80% of the drawbacks are practices linked with functions of school leadership, hence is indicated as the recommended starting point for efforts to improve school practices that can lead in turn to an enhanced teacher self-efficacy in inclusive education. This diagram endorses the conclusions of this study elaborated on in Chapter 5 section 5.3.

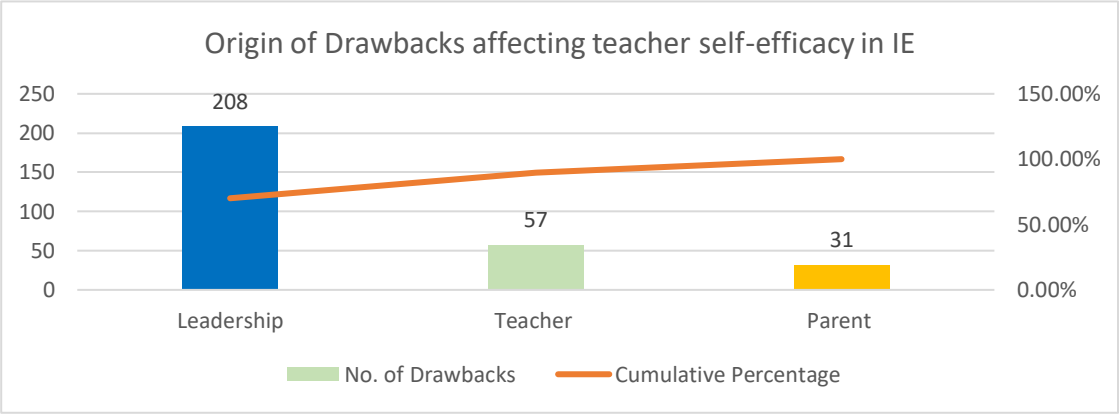

Figure 7. Pareto chart (2) showing drawbacks in inclusion practices regrouped by school leadership, teachers and parents.

5 CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This chapter brings together the main results from Chapter 4 for an interpretation of the findings in section 5.1. to illustrate how teacher self-efficacy is affected by their school inclusion practices, as described from the teachers' perspective. This section will indicate the contribution to knowledge in this study.

Conclusions follow in section 5.2 through a synthesis of the results that answer research question 5 towards conceptualising the role that teacher self-efficacy plays in school inclusion.

5.1 Discussion of Results

A summary of the results in response to the research questions of the study are given below.

Research Question1: Teachers' understandings of Inclusive Education:

Teachers' understandings of IE show variance in their understanding both across and within schools. Participants in MoE schools unanimously stated it is about catering to the learning and social integration of students with disabilities; while in US and UK schools, teachers reported that the social integration of students with disabilities comes first. Teachers reported they are held accountable to the schools' internal policies rather than to policies of the authority that are aligned with UNCRPD.

It is common to find different practices of inclusion in different countries of the world, but within an entity whose policies commit clearly to UNCRPD, some schools appear to be choosing to continue with out-dated practices. Differences in the understanding of what IE stands for within one small geographic entity such as Dubai is an indication of policies not being enacted.

Research Question 2: Teachers' views on how IE is enacted in their schools:

The variety of understandings of IE obtained in Q 1 suggests that schools translate these understandings into different inclusion practices. As most participants showed very limited knowledge of IE principles, the views expressed by teachers would necessarily relate to their specific school policies on inclusion. In

most schools in this study, the kind of inclusion implemented follows the medical model rather than the authority's policy of DIEPF. Below are the main factors reported by teachers as affecting them negatively in their efforts in inclusion:

- Limited guidance they received due to under-staffing of inclusion specialists;
- Limited support, both directly for the teacher, and indirectly as student support staff, who were generally viewed as underqualified;
- Timing and quality of training that did not provide solutions to challenges they faced in their classrooms;
- Frequent inaccuracies in identifying students with disabilities;
- Commonly belated IEP;
- Added load of work in catering for students with disabilities;
- Roles of staff members are not clarified, and staff relations are strained; hence there is no sense of collaboration amongst teaching staff as all working towards the same purpose.

Teachers' responses showed a dearth of knowledge of IE as defined by DIEPF; common misconceptions of some of the basic terms used in IE; and a lack of clarity concerning goals to achieve with students, and regarding the right tools to assess student outcomes. What this means for teachers is that both the input and processes applied in the school as an organization presumably undergoing change towards accommodating students with disabilities were such that teachers feel ill-equipped to cope with students with disabilities.

Research Question 3: <u>Teachers' self-confidence in their abilities to cater to students with disabilities:</u>

In spite of all the shortcomings reported in research question 2, teachers generally stated they were confident in their abilities and in their empathetic approach to impart a sense of social well-being for students with disabilities. However, teachers who were the most assertive of their abilities were those who through their own efforts achieved a 'mastery' learning which boosted their self-efficacy (Bandura,1986,1977), and those who noted the positive effect of their empathetic approach on students with disabilities. Especially in schools that

prescribe the implementation of a curriculum of limited content and quality for students with disabilities, i.e., schools where the medical model of inclusion is applied, teachers generally stated a high self-confidence. But since the same teachers reported the highest level of difficulty in 'assessing the learning of students with disabilities', an area that was challenging even for teachers with some experience in inclusion, such judgements may be considered as inflated self-perceptions.

These self-judgements should therefore be taken as relating to the specific kind of inclusion experience they went through in their schools, which is not necessarily linked to IE as indicated in DIEPF, yet have contributed to a stronger belief in their competences.

Research Question 4: What factors enhance/reduce teacher self-efficacy in the experience in IE ?

Teachers' responses to research question 3 above resonate with the factors in the Conceptual Framework of this study in section (1.9.), which in turn are based on international research findings and are indicated as affecting teacher self-efficacy. These same factors, when used to support teachers, may enhance their self-efficacy; or otherwise, would have a negative effect. Almost all these factors are within the remit of school leadership and are highly dependent on the school leadership style as an organization, in terms of structures, processes, and collegiate relationships (Hadfield and Ainscow, 2018); on the support they provide teachers both in schools processes and through opportunities that lead to honing teachers' competences through on-going professional development.

5.2 Research Question 5

How effective is the concept of self-efficacy in helping to identify and conceptualise the issues related to inclusive education?

This research question aims to produce a synthesis of all the data gathered as it links the threads of thought covered in this study and leads to the Conclusions. The research methods used have elicited ample data that answer the research

questions, and demonstrate how teacher self-efficacy is influenced by the constructs in the conceptual framework in section 1.9.1.

As the way onwards in the UAE is to transform all private schools to become inclusive, and self-efficacy acts as a predictor of one's actions and as a measure of dedication to perform a challenging task (Kunnari et al., 2018) then the notion that nurturing teacher self-efficacy is a target that is as important to attain as the improvement of student outcomes. In the conceptual framework, 'school leadership' constitutes an umbrella for many actions, personal attributes, and relationships maintained in a school, since individual self-efficacy is not only recognised as important for the individual to perceive an ability to perform a task and decide what action to undertake, but it also appears to be at the root of collective efficacy (Bandura 1982).

If the road to effective IE is through inputs that enhance teacher self-efficacy, it follows that the corollary is true, i.e., a wavering self-efficacy is a symptom of some deficiency in the school as an organization and is highly likely to have a negative effect on teacher self-efficacy which in turn impacts the effectiveness of IE. Therefore, the significance of this study is the argument it adds to previous knowledge that teacher self-efficacy can serve as a sensor to conceptualise any issues in the inclusion practices in a school that may be negatively affecting the teachers' level of self-confidence. Shortcomings in the school environment can be detected and addressed by an agile leadership.

Research findings indicate that individuals with a strong self-efficacy have stronger collective efficacy beliefs than those with low self-efficacy; show better academic performance; and use more high-level cognitive skills in group discussion (Wang and Lin, 2007). Hence the importance of enhancing individual self-efficacy as a first step towards the desired collective efficacy that is crucial in IE, for which teachers in this study demonstrated their need, but sought to consult with peers in other schools rather than in their same schools.

However, collective efficacy involves relationships which can influence the degree of collaboration among team members (Bhroin and King, 2020), and can

impact the behaviour of individuals beyond their individual self-efficacy (Yaakobi, 2018). As collective efficacy is also about relationship building amongst all levels of school staff, this brings home the role of the school leadership: research findings have indicated the importance of the personal attributes of a school principal in leading change as a driving force that enhances teacher self-efficacy (Weisel and Dror, 2006; Urton et al., 2014). A school principal can influence the school's collective efficacy by creating a steadfast instructional focus with the goal of students' deep understanding; developing teacher leaders; and leading by example (Chapman et al., 2011; Versland and Erickson, 2017).

The value of establishing collective efficacy in a school is that it naturally entails maintaining a professional dialogue among staff, which when guided by specialists is in itself a learning session within the teachers' professional development. Simultaneously, such a dialogue can help leadership in monitoring factors of the school environment; and watching out for any signs of low teacher self-efficacy, many of the issues listed in the Pareto chart in section 4.4 can be amended. However, teachers in five schools in this study reported their leadership is usually detached from teachers and operate as a strict hierarchy where teachers have no voice in decision-making regarding instruction, and do not feel empowered through a professional development that responds to their classroom needs. For this to take place, school leadership need to put in place a set of structures and procedures that can drastically improve staff inter-relationships, as alluded to in the conceptual framework. Falling short of producing the authority's desired outcomes suggests that schools in this study need a flexible system of leadership that allocates space for teachers to discuss, agree and innovate in their teaching practices, and leads by example.

Within the remit of school leadership, the conceptual framework includes the following: 'school structures and procedures', and 'staff roles and relations', which when applied adequately, can embed a school ethos that promotes greater collaboration among staff members (Ainscow and Miles, 2009), thus enhancing teacher self-efficacy and self-esteem, and potentially leading to a sense of collective

efficacy. ‘Adequate training and support’ also appear in the conceptual framework, and their importance is emphasised in the literature for an effective inclusion (Nuo et al., 2016; Crispel and Kasperski, 2019). Such training need not be only in the form of a course, but may also be through a variety of ways that develop competencies in collaborative practices (Bhroin and King, 2020)

In this study, teachers’ statements expressing confidence in their abilities show they were commonly not fit for the required practices of IE which this study set out to investigate: their responses included contradictions in their judgements; and the misconceptions of terms as practiced by their schools, make their self-judgements irrelevant to IE. But nevertheless, their perceived efficacy is an expression of the teachers’ sense of victory over their initial fear, and as such is a positive psychological state in itself as a step forward from the previous negative attitudes of many teachers towards disability. Although many teachers stated they still feel stressed whenever they have new cases in their classrooms, yet they recognize that with the right support, they can deliver. However, they noted that their stress is mostly due to school processes that do not address the teachers’ need for support, in spite of the emphasis of DIEPF, UNCRPD, and SDG4 on the crucial need to empower teachers with the right competences for IE to be effective.

Literature shows contrasting findings with respect to teachers’ knowledge of legislation relating to IE: some researchers indicate that such knowledge does not reduce teachers’ stress about having to cater for students with disabilities in their classrooms (Forlin and Chambers, 2011); while Urton et al., (2014) found that knowledge of inclusion legislation was amongst the factors that enhance teacher self-efficacy towards teaching within inclusive settings. Most of the teachers in this study stated their initial stress was due to their ignorance of what action to undertake and the right teaching strategies to use, as well as a lack of clarity of the objectives to achieve with students with disabilities. Therefore, ‘clarity of definition’ and ‘focus of evidence’ (Ainscow and Miles, 2009) are particularly important for these schools, as they can put teachers on track and potentially reduce their feeling of being at a loss of pertinent actions and practices to undertake.

5.3 Contributions of this study on teacher self-efficacy in IE

A wealth of data from a teacher perspective was produced on IE in this study. The factors listed in section 5.1 and their related school practices that were found to negatively affect teacher self-efficacy are included in the conceptual framework (section 1.9) of this study. Regardless what model of inclusion is applied, these same factors are expected to be even more counter-productive in schools that implement the social model as they stand in sharp contrast with IE accepted practices.

Of the many components that affect teacher self-efficacy in the list in section 5.1, two major umbrella factors emerge from this study, and are indicated in the literature as crucial for inclusive education. These are: school leadership; and collective efficacy, as discussed below:

I)School leadership: Most of the factors reported in section 5.1 represent the inductive approach of data gathering in this study, and were found to lie within the monitoring responsibilities of a school leadership. Leaning onto Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (1997) in a deductive approach, finds teacher self-efficacy is in constant reciprocal interaction with environmental factors such as the school context, which can lead to a change in behaviour (Henson, 2001). Research findings indicate that when leadership addresses such factors, teacher attitudes towards inclusion impact collaboration (Savolainen et al., 2012) and motivate them to take a positive turn (Chapman et al., 2011), thus as predictors of behaviour, are likely to lead to the desired teacher actions.

A triangulation with inspection judgements from the School Inspection Reports of the schools in this study for the year 2017-2018 includes the following description of leadership in four of the schools in this study as follows:

- No effective use is made of information from assessments to inform the school's processes of self -evaluation'.

-'In turn, this does not provide a realistic view of the school's performance';

- 'Self-evaluation is not sufficiently accurate';

- ‘Self-evaluation is inflated’.

- ‘ …the need to provide professional development to improve the quality of teaching’.

Such shortcomings are key elements to consider in informed planning; are crucial requirements for IE to be effective; and are recommended by DIEPF as steps to follow in all stages of implementing IE. As school self-evaluation is a flawed process at the leadership level, it is therefore questionable whether it is any better at the teachers’ level.

With the disruption of education systems worldwide following the outbreak of the pandemic COVID 19, education provision has been oscillating between in-school and virtual since February 2020, and is likely to carry on that way for some time. This present change in the work environment affects teachers and students with diverse abilities; and as self-efficacy is context-specific (Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998), may affect even teachers with a strong self-efficacy, as online teaching requires certain skills in the use of technology, which many may not possess, and may thus weaken their self- efficacy. Retention of a competent teacher workforce is also a worldwide challenge (Podolsky et al., 2019), even in countries with a longer history of experience in inclusion, and where technology is more widely available for use in education. Hence, attending to teacher self-efficacy is not a luxury but is a growing need to retain competent teachers, and avoid teacher attrition due to burn-out (Schwarzer and Hallum, 2008; Skaalvik and Skaalvik, 2007).

II) Collective efficacy:

Collective efficacy is yet another construct where school leadership plays an important role. Bandura (1993, 1997) viewed collective efficacy as a group’s shared belief that by using their capabilities to organize and implement actions can achieve desired results. However, for this to happen requires teachers to believe in the benefit of teamwork for improved student learning (Goddard et al., 2015); and school principals to enable and support certain organizational and cultural contexts (Pietsch and Tulowitzki, 2018) to be in place for collaboration among staff to occur.

As a construct, collective efficacy has emerged as an important finding in this study, and was not initially included in the conceptual framework because 'collective efficacy perceptions are strongly informed by mastery experience' (Goddard et al., 2004); and since an experience of 'mastery' and its resulting individual self-efficacy were not expected to be the case in the schools of this study, a collective efficacy of teaching staff could not be expected to exist. However, more than half the teachers in this study expressed their need to discuss and consult with their peers, but their preference was across different schools rather than within their school, probably because their own schools do not provide platforms, or structures to promote teacher collaboration and inside-school peer consultation, which is another aspect that school leadership would need to prioritise in their plans for accommodating IE.

Collaboration, a basic requirement for such joint efforts to be effective (Ainscow and Sandill, 2010), has been found to create significant changes in teachers' work and students' learning (Kunnari et al., 2018). However, working as a team is a notion that is still being introduced in schools in this study. Especially when working on developing an IEP, collaboration is a key principle when followed based on the definition below:

> '…an interactive process where a number of people with particular expertise come together as equals to generate an appropriate programme or process or find solutions to problems' (NCSE 2006, in Bhroin and King, 2020).

However, in schools in this study, the term 'collaboration' was yet another term misconceived, as the understanding of 14 participants in four schools was that it meant assistance given to subject teachers to reduce their work-load and responsibility of catering to the learning needs of students with disability. Consistency and coherence are two key attributes of school processes for inclusion to be effective (ibid.), but when this is not the case due to a lack of clearly defined roles, challenges to effective team-work arise and present another missed opportunity in developing teachers' sense of a collective efficacy in a school. This is likely to explain why more than half the participants reported to survey question 4.10 that:

> ‘interacting with teachers from other schools regarding students with disabilities is more effective than in-school teacher collaboration’.

However, since teachers’ professional learning may be conceptualised as ‘change in cognition leading to changes in teaching practice and students’ learning outcomes’ (Bhroin and King, 2020), then these teachers’ responses back the research finding that learning need not only be through formal training sessions but can also take place in various forms such as short but intensive workshops (ibid.; Nuo et al., 2016).

5.4 Conclusions

The findings of this study contribute to making the teachers’ voice heard on issues in a school environment known to generally affect teacher self-efficacy in IE. In general, teachers claimed they were confident in their abilities to cope with inclusion. As a construct, teacher self-efficacy reflects the functionality status of many other aspects in a school, and taking measures to enhance teacher self-efficacy can facilitate the achievement of other goals towards improving IE in a school.

Below are suggestions that emerged from the findings:

1.The Pareto Chart in Chapter 4, section 4.4 shows that the majority of drawbacks to teacher self-efficacy lie within the remit of school leadership, indicating the need for their thorough training to embed IE principles in their schools. Also needed is further on-going coaching on leading in a mainstream school, with inclusion viewed as a continuous process of learning for all staff, a journey that embraces change within a cycle of plan-act-assess as the only constant norm. School structures and processes need to be revisited, and leadership style to allow innovating in teaching practices to serve a determined purpose.

2.School processes need to be focusing on ‘*clarity of definition’* for all terms used, and ‘*forms of evidence’* to assess any actions taken (Ainscow and Miles, 2009) can eliminate existing issues in teachers’ practices and establish practices of collaboration that can lead to an enhanced collective efficacy.

3.Teachers' professional development need not consist of the generic lecture courses, fixed in content and timing, which was described almost unanimously by participants as unhelpful in providing solutions for their classroom challenges. In many countries of the world with a longer experience in inclusion (Florian and Camedda, 2020), the question of how teachers can be better prepared to respond to the diverse needs of learners in today's schools is still an on-going debate. However, as the roles of teachers are making increasing demands on teaching skills and competencies, the road to an enhanced self-efficacy is a journey that involves teachers' on-going learning by engaging actively in all the stages of planning and self-evaluation of their interactions with students; in decision-making regarding instruction; and as practitioners in the field, teachers' voice needs to be heard.

5.5 Further Research Recommended

This study included specifically schools considered by the authorities as low-performing, with the purpose of gaining insights on how teacher self-efficacy in these schools can be enhanced in IE. As there is typically a high mobility of teachers in most of the private schools in Dubai, investigating the self-efficacy of teachers in these better-performing schools can be still more helpful to learn from.

Another key aspect would be to investigate the level of teacher collaboration and its effect on student learning in mainstream classes.

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7 APPENDICES

7.1 Appendix 1-School Profiles and Data of Participants

1. Profiles of Visited School

To contextualise the views and beliefs expressed by participants in this study, this section provides a brief description of school profiles visited. From the online School Inspection Reports, secondary data are used to present an overview of the demographic composition of the schools and to reflect the cultural backgrounds of their teachers with respect to inclusive education.

As for the participants, primary data were gathered first-hand from them during the interviews, and at least in terms of timing, were gathered together with the participants' responses to the survey, hence somehow constitute part of the findings, as I had no way of knowing a priori who would be available to participate.

The layout of the school profiles are given by school type, and are followed by samples of School Inspection judgements because they indicate some of the aspects for which the schools were given a low rating by the School Inspection teams at KHDA. Section (2) then provides the collective data of participants in Table (1).

Given the awareness that school inspection judgements are descriptions of the government authority provided within the quality assurance to ensure schools enact its policies concerning inclusive education within an identified political agenda, yet as they are based on professional criteria, they may be considered as fair, and the flaws they indicate are instrumental for this study. In almost all stages of the education cycle, from planning to implementation, the actions taken by the schools in this study show limited relation to operations being based on sound and professional measures. This not only raises questions regarding the reliability of processes in these schools, but also within such school environments, also for what teachers' self-efficacy is like, how big are the challenges they meet, how well prepared they are to cope with inclusion, how much more remote were their instruction skills five years back, and what have they achieved by now. Such school

environments cannot be expected to contribute to enhancing teachers' self-confidence in inclusive education. Within these same reports are also results of satisfaction surveys conducted annually by KHDA, for parents, students and teachers, which show that in general, parents and teachers are satisfied with the education provision in the schools, while students were generally more critical of the education provided.

The seven schools visited in this study are institutions that were established 3-4 decades ago, long before most of the currently existing private schools in Dubai. Six of the seven schools visited in this study include all stages for 4-18 year-old students, while the seventh school has grades for students aged 4-14. In five of these schools, Emirati students make up 30-80 percent of the student populations of each school, and as they have been rated as persistently low-performing schools by the School Inspection teams at KHDA, these schools are a matter of concern for the UAE authorities. Teacher turnover in these schools ranges from 23 percent to 30 percent. All schools have taken steps for improvement in overall and inclusion provision but are at different stages in their transitions.

I) **MoE-curriculum schools**: Prior to the establishment of KHDA in 2007 as the government regulator of private schools in Dubai, these MoE- private schools were regulated by the MoE but were independent in hiring staff and in school-management matters. The student population in the two MoE schools in this study is about 4,000, about half of whom are Emirati citizens. The majority of students experiencing SEND are in the primary stage, hence the low quality of education provision in these schools is a source of concern for the UAE authorities. Teachers are expatriates mostly from neighbouring Arab countries, hired as temporary residents commonly on a 2-3 year contract, which raises questions about what knowledge and experience they had with students with SEND; about school management decisions regarding retaining their teachers, and the pertinence of training and support they receive.

The two MoE Schools in this study are located in different neighbourhoods but now both have to compete with a number of new schools that have been

established nearby in the past ten years. According to anecdotal evidence of interviewees, the more affluent parents have moved their children to these other schools seeking better provision for SEND students; thus, in their view, this school was left with students from lower socio-economic backgrounds.

The School Inspection Reports included the below recommendations for the MoE schools:

> School (MoE-1)-'*Ensure that the self-evaluation process makes effective use of evidence, including assessment information, to produce a realistic picture of all areas of school performance.'*
>
> School (MoE-1) - '*Revise individual education plans to identify each student's learning need clearly and enable teachers to use them effectively in lessons.'*
>
> School (MoE-2)-*' Improve the quality of teaching and curriculum modifications to maximise progress in each class for each student*.

II) **US-curriculum schools**: these schools are especially popular with Emirati citizens making up 70 percent to 80 percent of the students enrolled, while the rest are a mix of students from various nationalities. Teachers are mostly from neighbouring Arab countries, and others are from many different continents. Only in one of the US-curriculum schools, the majority are fresh graduates recruited from USA with some experience in SEN, and where the school management is closest to applying the staffing requirements as per DIEPF. The three schools are making attempts towards improvement but are each in a different stage of their development.

The School Inspection Reports made the following comments on the US schools in this study:

> School (US-1): '*The school's improvement plans have objectives that are insufficiently defined. They lack focus on specific targets for improvement, the details of resources and timescales, and the staff responsible for achieving them.'*

School (US-2): '*Hold classroom teachers accountable for deploying the teaching strategies provided by the SEND department which enable students with SEND to make more rapid progress.'*

School (US-3): '*Provide coaching of teachers in effective teaching strategies that are designed for targeted instruction of individual students.'*

III) **UK-curriculum schools**:

These schools serve students mostly from Pakistan, and teachers are mostly from India and other Asian countries. A positive ethos towards inclusion prevails and has undergone many basic changes at the start of the school year to improve leadership quality and teaching capacity, with about two thirds of the teaching staff being substituted with new recruits who mostly lack experience in inclusion, while the experience of others is in line with the out-dated version of inclusion as the mere physical accommodation of students with SEND in mainstream classes. The school recently hired one specialised Support Teacher to provide professional guidance and support to teachers to operate along the principles of inclusive education, but interviewees reported they need more frequent guidance sessions.

In the second school, most of the teachers interviewed have been working in this school for many years, and stated they know most of the students with SEND since they were admitted to early primary grades, and that they rely mostly on their own knowledge and experience with these students. The empathetic approach seems to work for the well-being of the students with SEND, but it is questionable what quality of teaching and learning are in place.

The School Inspection Reports made the following comments on the UK schools in this study:

School (UK-1): '*Ensure goals in all individual education plans have shorter, measurable steps in order to evaluate progress more accurately over time.'*

School (UK -2): '*Middle leaders should work closely with all teachers to establish an accurate evaluation of students' current achievements and identify what needs to be done next to improve this.'*

School (UK-2): '*Provide targeted professional development to improve the quality of teaching.'*

The student satisfaction survey showed wide discrepancies between the two UK schools: satisfaction rate was 70 percent in School (1), where a SEN specialist Support Teacher was hired a year before this study was conducted; while in School (2), only 16 percent of students were satisfied: four out of every ten students raised the issue that teachers do not treat students fairly.

2. Data of Participants

This section on data of the participants is presented as part of this chapter on Findings, and precedes the data gathered from the participants for two reasons: first, because it was gathered through the survey, first-hand from the participants in my encounters, unlike the school profiles in the previous section which were secondary data gathered from the School Inspection Reports of the schools visited. Secondly, it places the participants' iterations in context.

The schools in this study have been purposively selected, but not the participating teachers, as these had to be left to the discretion of school management to grant my request to interview teachers of different subjects, experience, gender, and stage within kindergarten to grade ten. The rationale was that although bias can never be excluded, but it is not very likely in the selection of teachers for the interviews, because each interview was timed in accordance with the school schedule, i.e., as per the occurrence of a 'free' period for any teacher, according to which they were therefore made available, with the least disruption to the school schedule. In any case, as a qualitative study, the views and beliefs of each individual count.

Therefore, I have placed this section to precede the responses gathered from the participants so they can be taken in context.

To sum up, Table (1) below provides data of the participants in this study by school, gender, post, experience and qualification in inclusion. Most of the participants were teachers (70%). Others were Learning Support Assistants (LSAs: 5), who support SEND students in their learning either alongside the subject teacher in the mainstream class, or in pull-out sessions with the student individually, or in small groups of similar student abilities; one SEN-specialised teacher; two highly specialized Support Teachers whose role is to guide teaching staff in inclusion practices; three Heads of Section (HoS) for SEN; three HoS for subject matter; and one Vice Principal. Of the total 50 participants from seven schools, 28 percent hold a qualification in SEN.

Table (1) below provides data of the participants by school, post, experience and qualification in SEN, and numbers of conducted interviews and focus group meetings.

Table (1) data of participants from all schools

School Curriculum/ (Total Participants)		Gender		Posts							Experience with SEND students (years)	Qualification in SEN	Number of Interviews of Individuals	No. Focus Group meetings* and (individuals)
	School	Female	Male	Teacher	LSA	SEN Teacher	Support T	HoS SEN	Other HoS	Vice Principal				
MoE (12)	Schl (1)	6	2	3	4	_	_	_	_	1	2 to 4	_	4	2 (2+2)
	Schl (2)	3	1	3	_	_	_	_	1	_	4 to 13	3	4	_
US (25)	Schl (1)	6	5	9	_	_	_	1	1	_	2 to 11	3	3	2 (4+4)
	Schl (2)	4	_	3	_	1		_	_	_	1 to 21	1	4	_
	Schl (3)	7	3	7	1	_	1	1	_	_	1 to 11	3	5	1 5)
UK (13)	Schl (1)	5	_	4	_	_	_	_	1	_	1 to 10	1	5	_
	Schl (2)	8	_	6	_	_	1	1	_	_	2 to 10	3	2	2 (3+3)
50 Participants	Totals	**39**	**11**	**35**	**5**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**3**	**1**		14		
		78%	22%	70%	10%							28%		

Remarks on data in Table (1):

- Teaching staff have a dominant female percentage in most private schools in Dubai;
- Of all participants, 70 percent were class or subject teachers, and 10% were Learning Support Assistants (LSAs);
- Experience with SEND students is given in number of years, but no indication was made whether the experience is in inclusion or in inclusive education;
- 28 percent of all participants possess any level of qualification in SEN;
- Interviews were conducted with 27 individual participants; and a total of 23 individuals participated in focus group meetings.

7.2 Appendix 2- Sample of Coded Responses

SAMPLE OF CODED RESPONSES

Codes	Participants' Responses
Understanding of IE	I initially try to socially integrate the child;
Leadership support	There is a gap in knowledge in IE between SEN teachers and subject teachers. School management does not bring these staff together or provide the right collaborative ethos and opportunity for professional dialogue between the two groups. A strong hierarchy is observed within the school structure, since most teachers are not qualified or trained to cater for IE
Staff attitudes	70-80% + accept SEN students as part of reality; 50% teachers accept the principle but not the practice of inclusion; regular students are negatively impacted by presence of SEN students; 2 teachers expressed bluntly they would prefer not to have SEN students in their class; they stated that 80% of other teachers share his view, and Understanding the law is the first step, but when you emphasize the human aspect, it becomes a strong driver to change teacher attitudes. 'Now that I know what the specific needs are of every SEN student, they become like every other student to me'. New teachers usually have a negative attitude to SEN because they do not know how to handle the situation.
Reasons for negative attitudes	Lack of knowledge & fear of the responsibility; low self-confidence (4/10) for about 2-3 months every time I have a new case; no experience/training; schools focus support for lower grades only; ' added workload and a lowered level of achievement by other students: When you are trying to multi-task teaching SEN students and regular kids, it's a waste of time for the regular kids'.
Time needed to change teacher attitude	several months; 1 year; fear eases 2-3 years when they become familiar with each case, then they 'improvise'; 50% carry on not making any effort for about 3 months.
Teacher readiness to cater to SEN students	50-60% not ready due to insufficient support. There is ignorance in how to deal with SEND students. With parents in denial, often SEND children are also ignored by class teachers. Students learn better in pull-out sessions, as they are less distracted than when in class.

Reasons for low readiness	Workload, about 30% more for SEN students; ignorance; lack of training; teaching SEN is not based on knowledge & professional criteria. Some teachers may not want to show that they are incapable of dealing with these cases. Inclusion is an added workload.
Training needs	We need not only generic but also needs-based training; hands-on; short term & long term; struggling with analysing CAT4; assessment & tracking student progress;
Leadership awareness of IE	Leadership need training; May not have same vision of IE; inability to detect teachers' 'show' of care; under-staffing of SEN- specialised teachers; In schools with more flexible leadership, subject teachers participate in school Self-Evaluation: this makes teachers reflect on their own decisions regarding activities and teaching strategies to apply.
Absence of shared vision at all levels	Affects decision-making, so all decisions are aligned; negative impact of task assignment to teachers
HoS SEN and Teacher relations	Trust in making changes to assessment, subject to providing evidence; in schools where subject teachers do not participate in discussing IEP, an opportunity for their learning and enhancing collaboration is lost; also, the fact that SEN alone assesses the SEN child undermines collegiate relationships. However, in some schools, the HoS SEN considers it her responsibility to evaluate to what extent a subject teacher is relying on the LSA to achieve student learning. We are lucky that the SLAs in this school have experience in SEN, which enhance collegiate relations. Some subject teachers do not like or even want to be told what type of special strategy to use with a child with SEND, as they feel they are overloaded and not ready to collaborate. No opportunity for a professional dialogue is made available by leadership, and subject Ts are not consulted when the SEND student report is written;
Complementarity of roles	There should be agreement on tasks of teachers; HoS/ SEN teachers practice push-in sessions x2 /week to identify student weakness. 'Support Teacher' (in MoE schools) may not be qualified in SEN

Structure & Staff relationships	Accountability to two HoS; gaps in communication, collaboration; HoS-teacher relationships mostly compliance, with limited opportunity for teachers to suggest different practices for fear of losing her job. A collegiate relationship and a complementarity of roles of teachers amongst all staff is crucial for the development of the cases w SEND.
Timing of IEP	ASAP; 1-2 months; even after IEP is handed to Subject teacher, mismatch can be found between what the student needs and what the teacher is doing. Although we are given a prepared IEP from the IE Committee, but when it comes to differentiation we do not always know how to go about that.
Identification of SEN cases	Inaccurate; not well communicated; Hence Action plan does not address the 'barriers'; some applicants are refused due to limitation of SEN specialists; HoS SEN states that most cases have become weak due to negligence in the early grades; in some schools no medical reports are presented, but it is left up to the T to discover what is the student weakness. It's easier in the lower grades to identify the social and communication issues. Some SEN cases were found to be talented, and developing their talent is an effective way to get over the emotional issue they had.
Understanding of Differentiation	Poor especially for needs-based task; teachers depend on their 'own knowledge' of the student, rather than the diagnosis of his needs. 'Differentiation' is understood to be reducing the content of material. it is not always clear what the next steps of learning should be. Who is to decide this? How flexible am I supposed to be?
How do teachers learn best?	Through observation; sharing experience, discussing & giving advice; modeling differentiation; A teacher can best learn about teaching practices appropriate for SEND student by going through the experience of himself implementing a certain new strategy, rather than by observing other teachers perform. It is only personal experience from which you learn. What I need to learn is about the specific case I am facing: how to deal with it. Only thru personal experience of learning by doing is best. Coaching sessions on my specific case, and embracing this knowledge and practices would be more effective.
Challenges teachers face	When type of student weakness is not known; It would be useful to be informed of the case of the child right from the beginning of the year

Parent role	40-50 % in denial at first/ignorant, but when positive, have a strong impact on student learning; They also ignore the child, especially as the parents often are in denial, so the child is left without any support .
Understanding of KHDA framework	not clear; stronger affiliation to school policy; leadership does not discuss KHDA framework with teachers or with HoS; Accountability to two HoS; HoS SEND admits her school did not discuss KHDA framework with teachers; "We are not made aware of KHDA inspection Framework, and we are never informed how our school was rated'. One teacher knows that KHDA indicators exist for general teaching and learning, but not for SEND students.
Discussion platform for teachers	Once per 2 weeks (infrequent), or lacking; once/week for SEN teachers+ subject teachers; in other school, meeting is 1/month.I consult some teachers through text messaging
Curriculum development	weak understanding how this is done; Grade 7-8 teacher thinks SEND students need to achieve the same learning outcomes as other students;
Teacher characteristics	personal ambition to succeed with SEN students; teacher efforts are generally not well appreciated, and underpaid; ambitious teachers view the challenge as an opportunity to learn
Shadow Teacher'/ (LSA)/Nanny	70% are high school graduates; monitored by HoS, but salary paid by parent of SEN. In schools were leadership is aware of IE, the LSA forms part of the team that creates the IEP. LSAs are helpful both for the student and the teacher, allowing her more time with the rest of the class. In schools where collegiality prevails, inexperienced Subject teachers learn from LSAs: Subject teacher creates assessment questions, and these are reviewed by the LSA and discussed together. Class teachers view LSAs as inferior to them; Some cannot read or write, so we do it for them: LSAs understand 'support' to mean they need to perform the learning task instead of the student.
Abilities	I am not sure whether I am helping or hindering her; I am not sure that what I am doing is best.
Student Assessment	how to measure a child's progress is happening, but it's not clear how to go forward.
Empathetic approach is priority	I find it is the motherly affection that was most effective for the child. Teacher's care is pastoral/emotional rather than based on professional criteria; close follow-up is important; Bonding with each SEN student is important: it is the anchor of trust

End of Appendix 2

7.3 Appendix 3: Definitions of Inclusion-related terms

	Federal UAE definition Medical Model	KHDA (Dubai Government) definition Rights-based Social Model
Access (to a curriculum)	A way into experiencing the curriculum (KHDA, ACTVET, ADEC, MoE, 2015,p.121).	The outcome of removing barriers to student learning
Equity	_	..the extent to which individuals can take advantage of education and training in terms of opportunities, access, treatment and **outcomes**. Equity is not the same as equality. It assumes that learners have different needs that require different types of support in order to develop their full learning potential. Equity therefore requires **differential** treatment that takes account of student diversity and **reduces gaps** between the outcomes achieved by the most advantaged and the least advantaged social groups. (KHDA, 2017, p.53)
Barriers	_	Attitudes, beliefs, practices, physical or technological obstacles., or the lack of support, that result in a student's exclusion form, or in their less-than-full participation as a valued equal in the common learning environment in mainstream schools and classrooms. (KHDA, 2017,p.53)
Disability	-A long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairment which may hinder a student's participation in the curriculum (KHDA, ACTVET, ADEC, MoE, 2015, p.123). - …any permanent or temporary condition resulting from an illness. This term is used more often to describe lack of capacity to perform the functions or loss of a body part. Thus, this is a condition impacting the ability of an individual to perform certain tasks (such as speaking or hearing), like other individuals. Although the term disability is often	A social condition that occurs when an individual with a long term limitation experiences attitudinal, social and environmental barriers that prevent full and effective participation within a community. A disability is the result of an individual's interaction with society and is not an attribute of the person. (KHDA, 2017,p.52)

	associated with physical problems, it is also used to refer to educational problems as well as problems of social adjustment. (MoE, 2010, p. 60).	
Impairment	_	A medically identified condition or long-term limitation of a person's physical, mental, cognitive, communicative and sensory function
Inclusion	-Access, support for learning and equal opportunities for all students, regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, ability or background (KHDA,ACTVET,ADEC and MoE, 2015, p.124). - The term inclusion is used to refer to the education of students with special needs in a regular classroom with their same-age peers who do not have disabilities. The aim of inclusion is to achieve the principle of equal educational opportunities for all students. (MoE, 2010, p.62)	_
Inclusive Education (IE)	_Inclusive education means that all students have the right to be educated to the extent possible with their age-appropriate peers who do not necessarily have disabilities in the general education setting of their neighborhood school with support provided. (MoE, 2010, p.14)	At its heart, inclusive education is a provision that is committed to educating all students, including students identified as experiencing special educational needs and disabilities(SEND) in a common learning environment. (KHDA, 2017, p.10).
Special Educational Needs (SEN)	Educational needs that are different from those of the majority of students. Students with SEN require additional support or challenge in order to make good progress.(Ex.: behavioural, sensory, physical, health-related disability, speech & language disorders, and communication and interaction. (KHDA, ACTVET, ADEC, MoE, 2015,p.127). Educational programs and practices designed for students with disabilities or Gifted and Talented students, whose mental ability, physical ability, emotional functioning, etc. requires special teaching approaches, equipment, or instruction within or	_

	outside of a regular classroom. (MoE, 2010, p.66)	
Special Educational Need and Disability (SEND)	_	A need which occurs when a student identified with an impairment requires the school to make specific modifications or provide specific supports to prevent, remove or reduce any potential disability from occurring and to ensure that the student can access education on an equitable basis and within a common learning environment with same-aged peers (KHDA, 2017, p.11).
Resource Room for Students With Disabilities	A classroom in a general education school where a qualified special education teacher provides instruction per the IEP to students with disabilities individually or in group for a period of not more than half of the school day	_
Individual Education Programme (IEP)	The Individual Education Program (IEP) is a written description of the present level of performance, measurable goals and needed special education programs and services for a student with special needs. (MoE., 2010, p.62)	
Objectives of IEP	Ensure that educational and support services meet the needs of students with special needs and to follow the procedures provided in the IEP in accordance with the Federal Law No. 29/2006 Regarding the Rights of People with Special Needs. (MoE, 2010, p.63)	

7.4 APPENDIX 4: Form of Consent to be Interviewed

Title of research: **Teacher Perceptions of their Self-Efficacy in Inclusive education: the case of Dubai Private Schools.**

An individual's Self-Efficacy (SE: confidence in one's ability to perform an action) is generally recognized as an important factor in the effective implementation of the action. As inclusive education in Dubai private schools became another indicator added to the KHDA School Inspection Framework in 2016, this study aims to capture your views as a teacher of Students of Determination in your classes. The purpose of the study is to gain insight on factors and actions that empower teacher SE in facing the challenges of inclusive education.

Interviewee's Rights

- Please be aware that your approval to be interviewed is based upon your own free will, and that you are free to withdraw at any time from the interview if you choose to do so.
- Upon introducing yourselves at the onset of an interview, please use only **pseudonyms** to avoid any disclosure of your identity. Also, please use the same pseudonym you have selected for the survey.

I, the undersigned participant, hereby confirm that I have received this notification, and agree to be interviewed.

Date: …./05/ 2019.

Name (**pseudonym**):

Researcher's commitments:

- I hereby confirm that your personal and your school's identities and all information received in your responses shall be treated with strict anonymity and confidentiality.
- Information provided in the interviews shall be used solely for the purpose of this study, and that your relationship with KHDA, your school, students or their parents shall in no way be compromised.
- Interviews shall be voice- recorded, transcribed and translated individually by the researcher only. Once the research report is accomplished, the audio and written records of the interviews shall be deleted.

Date: …./05/ 2019.

Researcher's name: Juman Karaman

Signature: